

IRISH *Writing*

EDITED BY DAVID MARCUS & TERENCE SMITH



THE MAGAZINE OF CONTEMPORARY
IRISH LITERATURE

28

The Letters of W. B. Yeats

Edited by ALLAN WADE. This collection covers almost the whole of Yeats's working life. He was an inveterate and communicative letter-writer, who seems to have written most easily and freely to a series of women friends—to Katharine Tynan in his youth, to Florence Farr, to Lady Gregory, and above all to Olivia Shakespear. Here also are letters to his fellow-poets, Robert Bridges, A. E., Arthur Symons; to artists with whom he worked; his opinions on literature, the theatre, politics, history, philosophy, and occultism. Allan Wade, who knew Yeats for many years and published in 1951 a comprehensive Bibliography of his writings, has provided brief chronological introductions and full notes.

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RUPERT HART-DAVIS

THE MIDNIGHT COURT



A very few copies of the Dolmen Press limited edition of *THE MIDNIGHT COURT*, by BRYAN MERRIMAN, translated by DAVID MARCUS, and decorated by MICHAEL BIGGS, have become available and may be had on application to the Press (Subscription 31s. 6d. (\$6)). Our 1954 Prospectus may be had on request.

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INTRODUCTION

As readers may learn from the front cover, and from the announcement opposite, *Irish Writing* is to undergo a fundamental change. In short, this issue is the last to be edited by the undersigned.

It is fashionable, it would seem, for literary magazines to blaze a trail that may or may not be brilliant but that is, too often, rather brief. In at least the length of its trail, *Irish Writing* has tried to be unfashionable—eight years is a goodly period: there is time in it for success as well as failure, and also for learning how to manage both. After eight years it is, perhaps, time—not to give up—but to give over, for a literary magazine needs new blood not merely in its pages but also behind them.

We said in No. 1—"Our concern lies with what is vital in Irish letters, and this we hope to give—may our symbol be the cornucopia!—in all its abounding variety." We have tried to keep that vow—we hope we may have succeeded. In our efforts, we found a number of friends, so large that it is impossible to thank them all. But, while we are on our feet for the last time, we must express our gratitude to the Irish writers, without whose co-operation we could not even have started, and to the many advertisers here, in Britain, and in the U.S., without whose help we could have started but not have continued. In addition we wish to thank our readers and subscribers for their interest and support, the newspapers, journals and Radio Eireann who reviewed our issues with honesty and encouragement, the publishers who sent books for review, the business houses who served us, and our printers. We have enjoyed many and excellent benefits and kindnesses—and we hope that *Irish Writing* will continue to enjoy them.

Which brings us to the last toast: to the new editor, S. J. White—may he labour with success and reward. That, we know, would leave everybody pleased.

DAVID MARCUS

TERENCE SMITH

Val Mulkerns

We can hardly claim, even in an advertisement, to have discovered Val Mulkerns. Her work is too familiar to readers of IRISH WRITING. So we will confine ourselves to giving you the good news that her second novel, A PEACOCK CRY, will be published on the 21st October at the price of 12/6.

A PEACOCK CRY is an unusual second book in that it fulfils all the promise of A TIME OUTWORN. Do you remember the reviewers' praise? "A promising and unusual first novel", said the *Times Literary Supplement*. "Miss Mulkerns has a simple and singing style, full of colour and precise in taste. Humorous natural, sensible and touching", C. P. Snow wrote in *The Sunday Times*. "She has captured much of the springy raciness of her native Dublin, and has drawn too an admirable picture of a corner of provincial Ireland", commented *The Sphere*.

All we need say, then, is that A PEACOCK CRY is again a novel of Ireland, and that it shows all the qualities of perception and grace which you have come to expect from Val Mulkerns.

HODDER AND STOUGHTON
Publishers of 'The Ascent of Everest'

FREDERICK ASHE

A MAIDEN'S PRAYER

"You're late!"

He had been sitting on the settee opposite the reception desk in the foyer of Daly's Hotel for almost an hour when she ambled in out of the sunshine of an October afternoon and said hello.

Although he was pleased to see her, she might not have thought so from his impassive mouth line and the cold eyes that flickered towards the doorway and then resumed their fixed stare at the bell push on the desk.

"Well?" he pressed her.

"I know I'm late, Tom, but the bus was in late and then who do you think was on it the whole way up but Bridgie Maguire, of all people! I could see she was bursting with curiosity so I had to pretend I was going up towards the cattle market with a message from me father about yesterday's cattle. That's what delayed me. I had to come round the long way."

"Bridgie Maguire?" he echoed shrewdly, peering up at her from under the peak of his cap. "What would she want with coming to Dublin on a Thursday for and her mother not able to look after the lodgers on her own? What way was she dressed?"

"Just in a dark costume and a high-necked blouse with a frill of lace to hide her goitre mark—the way she was dressed last Sunday at Mass."

"Had she any bags?"

"Just her handbag."

He seemed to ponder this. "She'll be back on the evening bus with you, so."

"Very likely. Oh, yes. I knew there was something else I wanted to tell you. She hadn't got her glasses on."

"No glasses? That's peculiar. I don't remember when I seen Bridgie last without her oul' tarnished specs on." He sank his chin again in the coarse woollen muffler about his throat. "All dressed up, too," he mused. "Bedad an' take care but she wouldn't be up after that bank clerk who was transferred in the summer! She's as cute as a pet fox, you know, and she can't see a stim without them glasses on. Oh, I know the bold Biddy of old! When you were only a slip of a girl, I had to mind me p's and q's with that lassie and her mother! You're sure she didn't follow you?" he enquired anxiously.

"She went up Westmoreland Street and I came down along the quays and round by Parliament Street."

"Good! No harm done, then, so long as we keep an eye open when we go out."

He raised himself up by his knuckles out of the deep settee and moved towards the stairway which leads to the downstairs lounge bar. She followed him obediently as she had done several times these last few months, clutching her handbag beneath her left breast, her round-toed, black shoes measuring each downward step of the man in front, clad as she knew him, winter and summer, in the same peat-brown, belted overcoat with the patch pockets to keep his hands warm.

The bar was deserted. It was early yet. In another hour or so, the soft lights and the coloured bottles would stimulate a thumping ache behind the eyes of the less sophisticated as the strident-voiced commercials returned to town for the long week-end. But Tom and his girl never stayed longer than a few minutes. Not that the possibility of their bumping into some of the travelling drapery men had ever occurred to Tom, cautious and all as he was. Dublin is a big city.

"Two lemonades," he said, passing the bar and leading the way into the inner lounge towards the vantage point of the corner table opposite the entrance. Yes, Dublin is a big city and Tom never stayed long at the bar at Daly's because, originally, he had never really meant to come downstairs at all, but from some nervous, pristine urge to hide himself somewhere, preferably underground, he had done just exactly that on the Thursday when he and Mary first kept rendezvous here. Things had gone so well with their secret since then that each successive tryst in Dublin had been preserved in exactly the same way for fear his luck might change and word get back to the town in which they both lived.

"Here again!" He sat down without opening the belt of his coat. "Here again, Mary girl, and no one the wiser!" He chuckled as he squeezed her playfully on the knee and she bent forward with wrinkled nose and an acquiescent snigger. Oh, she was glad to be sitting! Her girth enveloped the seat; her fleshy insteps, snugly covered in lisle, felt as if they must burst the mooring buttons loose from the thin straps of her shoes.

But she was happy. And, when the minerals had been served, she waited for Tom to sip his before raising her own glass and winking across it to the accompaniment of a shrill whinny of laughter in which Tom joined immoderately, wagging his head. "Oh dear, oh dear!" He took off his cap and smoothed back the thin strands of hair. "Yes indeed," he mused. "There'd be a quare oul' commotion at home if they knew about us, eh?" He laughed again. "Can y' imagine if Bridgie Maguire found out

we were meeting up here regularly ? ”

“ God preserve us ! ” Mary threw up her hands in mock horror. “ You’d have to put up the banns there and then, Tom. It’d be a real case of letting the cat out of the bag ! ”

“ No fear ! ” he crowed, “ no fear ! I’m too ould a hand to be caught that easy ! ” Grasping his glass, he paused, doubtfully, as he held the drink in front of his nose and gazed down into the bubble-pricked amber. “ Aw haw, no,” he persisted, a trifle loudly, “ I’ve been covering up me tracks for too long now to be caught that easy ! I don’t want the whole countryside marryin’ me off before I’ve a chance to make up me own mind, y’understand ? ”

“ ’Tis true for y’, Tom. You’re right. What they don’t know won’t hurt them ! ”

She watched him drain the tumbler, taking stock of his long jowl as he swallowed and the forward, rotary motion of the tiny, curved hair on his Adam’s Apple.

“ C’mon, girl,” he said abruptly, setting down the glass and rising to his feet. “ I’ve a few calls to make before the warehouses shut.”

She foostered at her lap and half rose from her chair. “ Wait now,” she remonstrated, taking up her handbag. But he was impatient to be gone, so she followed him out of the bar and up the stairs again to the foyer, whence they emerged, side by side, and walked up Dame Street.

With the warm sun in his face and the leisurely gait of his companion to keep step with his own, Tom’s brief anxieties subsided and he was even faintly grinning again at the thought of his own cunning when Mary produced a bag of sweets that she bought for the bus journey and offered him one.

“ No, oh no,” he grimaced, touching his mouth with his index finger by way of explanation, “ me teeth.”

She took a sweet herself, a firm caramel which, under the pressure exercised by a strong jaw bone, was soon reduced to a lubricated, tacky mass as she surveyed the buildings on both sides of the busy street and grunted agreement with the points of Tom’s monologue.

“ Toys,” he was saying, “ it’d be no harm if I was to order the toys now because, if I wait any longer the warehouses mightn’t be inclined to give me the cheaper lines, not being a regular. Do you know,” he continued, “ I often packed the shelves and the floor at the boot counter with toys a week before Christmas and was all sold out on Christmas Eve ? There’s great profit in toys—over a hundred per cent. on some things—easy money, so easy that this year, I think, in God’s name, I’ll push up the orders a bit and make sure of having something for the latecomers on Christmas Eve. The men’ll pay any price when they come in

late with a few drinks taken."

"Sure any I have left over," he added as an afterthought, "will keep till next year."

"I always heard toys were a great seasonal line," she ventured.

"Aye. Toys and Easter novelties. I often heard me poor mother say that toys and Easter eggs was 'found money'."

"You must miss your poor mother a lot, Tom—in the business, I mean," she added hastily.

"Bedad an' I do, she had a great head on her, even—" He broke off and looked suspiciously at Mary's profile, but Mary appeared to be unconcernedly chewing her caramel, squinting into the sun sinking behind Christ Church Cathedral.

Blast Bridgie Maguire, he was thinking. It was a poor state of affairs when a man couldn't feel safe even in Dublin city. He would feel so much happier if he could get some inkling of what that long-beaked faggot was doing up in the city of a Thursday. Not that he cared very much what she was doing, but it was always so much easier to plan when you knew what people were up to. Blast her anyway!

"Now, there's a few wholesalers between here and the quays that I want to call on, Mary," he continued out loud, "and I don't want you coming in with me or hanging around the doors. You'd never know who'd be up buying and, anyway, the assistants in these places all know me. There's no use running any risks."

"Okay. Sure I can go down to Saint Audeon's and say a few prayers. You won't be all that length of time, will you? How long do you think you'll be?"

"It all depends, but," he fumbled inside the breast of his overcoat and took out a watch on a strap, "let me see, it's nearly a quarter to four now. I'll see you, without fail, here, exactly here at this corner, at five o'clock. That'll give us time for a nice walk back to Daly's and a comfortable cup of tea before you catch the bus. How will that suit?"

"Right you are, Tom, anything you say. Well," she raised her fingers coyly in farewell, "pip pip."

Tom went off down Winetavern Street without a word and Mary sauntered up slowly towards the church. Not that she particularly wanted to go into a church, but where else does one go with an hour to spare? She was so pleased with herself this mild evening that she felt almost sorry for the people hurrying past her about their own dull business. Dublin, for her, was always so exciting.

The interior of the church appeared dark as she genuflected, easing herself into a seat, the edge of which was rather too near the kneeling board. And, now that she was here, she felt impelled to offer thanks to God for the wonderful opportunity afforded her

of being singled out by one of the most comfortable men in the town, even if he was a bit peculiar and considered a bit odd by some of the neighbours. If only God would see fit to put some kind of a hurry on him, although she knew very well that a man in Tom's position had to be cautious, very cautious.

Suddenly, the church was not so much dark inside as gloomy and cold. The thanksgiving offering which, from the fullness of her heart, she meant to utter, somehow chilled in a tightening apprehension that she could sense in her breast. Her heart sank and her gratitude became a surging prayer of supplication. The easy, comfortable buoyancy in her thighs and legs was there no more and she wanted to sit, just sit down and close her eyes. Perhaps if she were a little more pushing with Tom . . . But, then, that was where Bridgie Maguire made the mistake long ago. She had heard that.

"Are y' comin'?"

The whispered words in her ear startled her. Tom had slid into the seat behind her and was already standing up to leave the church.

"Surely it isn't an hour since we parted!" she whispered back, joining him in the aisle. "You said five o'clock!"

"I know. It's not half-four yet, but, to tell you the truth, I felt a bit uneasy with Bridgie Maguire hanging around town and I thought it might be safer if we got back to the hotel and stayed there till it's time for you to catch the bus. You know, if that rip once got on our trail, it'd be all U.P. up!"

U.P. up. The words kept tapping in her brain and she no longer felt elation in this strange courtship. Indeed, she was beginning to feel queer inside about it all. Not cheap, as one less simple, less worthy, might have felt, but queer and flat, as if she had nothing to offer a man anyway. And Tom was walking quickly now, his toes swinging inwards, looking neither to right nor left but far ahead so that both sides at once of the narrow thoroughfare were visible to his slitted eyes. He was walking a little too fast for her, hands dug deep into his overcoat pockets, shoulders hunched, so she felt she must do what she had never done before. Her hand stole up meekly behind his elbow and inserted itself till she was linking him.

"It's not that I mind much being seen," he explained grudgingly with a slight pressure of his arm. "Surely a man can meet an old neighbour and have a chat, but it's the interpretation that might be put on it."

"I know, Tom." She shivered and drew closer to him. "It's beginning to turn cold."

"You'll be as right as the mail, girl, when you get a cup of tea inside you!"

But, back in the hotel. the hot tea and the frizzly rasher

rind, together with that delicious odour of wide, lobster-red bacon failed to stimulate an appetite or warm her famished spirit. Perhaps it was the caramels she had eaten. She had no heart for food now. Her jaws were tired, and even the crisp vienna bread, smothered to its outer crust in butter spread from pliable, soft butter balls, tasted insipid and dry to her palate. Tom, on the other hand, ate with florid relish, applying his knife and fork to the fry with a coarse, concentrated skill. Yet, his mind was not on his food at this moment, much less on the vapid surface of Mary's cooling tea as she gazed listlessly over the heads of the people coming and going and nibbled at a crust.

"I was just wondering would there be any chance they'd change the half day in the town from Thursday to Wednesday," he mused.

After a brief silence, he looked up and she turned her eyes towards him by moving her head.

"I was just wondering would there be any chance they'd change the half,—is there anything wrong with you, girl?"

"No, n-no." She shook her head and blushed. "No, Tom, I just wasn't minding. What's that you said?"

"It was about the half-day," he repeated, examining her face closely, "there was a lot of talk,—aw, cheer up, woman! You're not dead yet, you know! Is there another cup of tea in the pot there? I could eat the side of a house this evening. Somehow, I always eat like a horse in Dublin. . ."

Mary removed the cosy from the tea-pot and took his cup.

"Cheer up," he was saying, "we'll be able to have another day up here soon again. Of course, the days'll be getting short from now on . . . And I'll be busy coming up to the Christmas." He peered over at her plate. "Why aren't you eating? You haven't eaten a bite since we sat down!"

"I just don't feel like anything, Tom, honestly. I think I must have walked a bit too much today."

"Nonsense! What you're angling for, I think, is a little tiddly down below-stairs!" He burst into a ragged cackle of laughter, rubbing his hands vigorously together in front of his nose. "Go on, now, I know y', pretending you wouldn't know the taste of it!"

His laughter diminished to a faint wheeze which resolved into a violent paroxysm of coughing. Conversation at the nearby tables ceased until the spasm had spent itself, leaving Tom gasping, "Ah, my God, ah my God!" Then, wiping a tear from his eye this time, "You're a caution and no mistake about it! Well, I'll tell you what I'll do. I'll walk with you as far as the Custom House when you're going for the bus tonight. It should be dark by then. Eh? I'll walk down as far as the Custom House, and now, if you'll excuse me, I want to go downstairs for a minute."

He rose from the table and sloped off towards the door which had barely swung to behind him when it swung violently open to readmit him, his face contorted and pale. He came back swiftly towards her, a finger on his lips and his eyes wild with apprehension.

"Stay where y'are!" he managed to say. "Stay where y'are, for the love of God, it's her! She spotted me outside the door!"

"Who? Who's outside the door?" Mary looked past his shoulder.

"Bridgie, you fool!" he sobbed. "Bridgie Maguire!" His knuckles showed white where his hands gripped the back of the chair in front of him. "I knew she'd ferret us out somehow. Of all the—! Is she coming? Mary! Is she coming over?"

But Mary kept mum, craning her neck to see round his bulk. A new light shone in her countenance and she was already smiling towards the grinning, greyhound teeth of Bridgie Maguire, who was jauntily approaching their table, wearing a span-new pair of horn-rimmed spectacles.

"Mary!" Tom kept calling, a catch in his voice. "Mary, will y' answer me?"

But the short, tingling hairs at the base of his neck told him the blow had fallen. He began to turn, with as much grace as he could muster, to meet Bridgie Maguire. After all, he tried to persuade himself, Bridgie had little to go on. It's no crime for a body to meet a friend in the city and, whether it was or not, he didn't care, he wasn't worrying. Yet, he knew in his heart that the jig was up—that the banns were as good as called. Oh, how he longed for a friendly hand to congratulate him, reassure him! Deep down inside him, he had the beginnings of an awful doubt such as he had felt from time to time after committing himself to a large order, or like the time he bought the surplus army material from the firm in England.

The above story was the winner of the English short-story section in the recent competition, sponsored by the Arts Council (through its Cork Advisory Body) for the encouragement of creative work in Munster.

SEAN LUCY

A PURGATORY

I.

He came at last to die
In his quiet room with the day fading
And the estuary below the shadowed garden
Standing at full tide.

Four years before his life had lost its meaning,
Since then he had been cold in his shabby house
And now was cold waiting for God and death.

Below the room where death was watching him
A singer with a meticulous sweet voice
Sang an old madrigal into the dusk,
While he was being wrapped away
And lapped deep in the long bands of silence.

He would have raised his failing heart to love
To God in the quietness, or to her
Who left the world cold four hard years ago,
But the wings of the dark angel held such stillness
That only the wide eyes in his old face
Lived for a little in the familiar room
Among the dusty books and the untidy clothes.

Cold as the voice of the singer
While the tide turned under the shadowy trees.
He went away down into the heart of death
Into the heart of darkness ;
And the thin body stiffening on the bed
Waited secretly to be found
By his indifferent relatives
Who smoked and read away in another room.

II

After the timeless period of death
He found himself in what might be the road
Outside his house.
The night made the high walls and the great trees
Full of a strange familiarity.

The gate where he had often kissed her coming home
Swung darkly in an empty wind,
Forcing him to accept his unreality.
He knew the futility of going in,
The moss on the old path,
And his cold shell silencing the pale house.

A purpose drew him,
An alien hope strong in his being,
And so he went away
Down the grey ribbon of the fading road
Under a starless sky.

III

All that sad night he was travelling the hills
Walking in what might be his younger body
Along the barren highway with the wind.
On his right lay away the rocky lands
And on his left a looming wall
Ran always like a long grey hound
To an invisible horizon.

Sometimes there seemed voices low on the road behind him,
Sometimes the fragments of a woman's song
Seemed to move on the wind in front of him.
Always the distant curlews called among the rocks on his right.
Yet held to the dark way of the pale road
By an alien hope
He pushed on through the night.

IV

In the early hours of unexpected morning
He came to a soft place woven with trees
Held by the rough hills and the shape of mountains.
He crossed a humpbacked bridge
Over the quiet rumour of shadowy water,
While the hills behind him took the grey shape of light
And the wind forgot itself in the widening sky.

He was not troubled by the loneliness
Having a steady journey drawing him,
But he was troubled by unworthiness
Feeling the long bare road into the mountains
Made by his cold heart in the yesterdays,
His steady feet over the distances
His expiation.

Sunrise came in cold gold
 Into the little wood where the way went,
 Under light shadows of the leaves
 The road bent sideways
 So that the tall moss-mottled wall
 Hid the stretch just ahead of him.

Where freckled shadows moved in greenness
 In the high branches of the waking trees,
 A thrush took up its song in gentleness,
 And in the soft song's keenness
 A deep familiarity of expected love
 Suddenly shook him out of his stubborn ease.

And when the way grew straight after its bending
 He saw her standing by the road,
 She who was still the dear and golden lady
 Of the happy singing of his other days,
 Waiting for him under the trees of morning,
 Standing as quiet as a fallow deer
 Where branches moved their shadows on the dust.
 Waiting for him and smiling.

Night's famine died behind him on bare hills.
 The thrush's voice rose to a new dimension,
 And in a place grown bright with meaning
 He came to her again and took her hands.

Looking into wide eyes of her love
 He could not speak at first because of the wonder of it.
 His soul flown high like a bird in the white of the air.

V

After a while he said :

"It has been long."

And she answered :

"Long."

And kissed him on the cheek.

"Tell me,"

he asked,

"why do I meet you here?"

She answered gravely, speaking quietly :

"My dear this is the long road of your making

By which you must go up over the mountains.

His angel pulls you always by the hair

And calls your footpace with a silent voice."

He asked again :

“ And how came you to share
The stony road of my indifferent heart ? ”
“ The journey is not lightfoot, dear,” she said,
“ But as he gave us love we are together,
And by his truth the sadness of the way
Shall burn us each according to our days
And the driving of his love be sharp upon us.”

Then they went together out of the wood of sunrise,
Walking the steep road in complete accord
So deep they did not trouble to hold hands.
Up where the curving mountains flamed with gorse in the sun,
And where the way grew far
Vertical clouds pillared the high horizon.

The above poem was the winner of the English poem section in the recent competition sponsored by the Arts Council (through its Cork Advisory Body) for the encouragement of creative work in Munster.

MIRACLES DON'T HAPPEN TWICE

I MET GIANCARLO ON THE SEAFRONT OF BARI LATE ONE DANK NIGHT in November. The Adriatic wind was cold. The waves slapped drearily along the Lungomare. Because of the chilly wind and the gusts of rain only a few people were out-of-doors, although all Bari loves to gravitate every night to the seafront, enjoying the lights of the cinemas, the big hotels, the fish-vendors' flares, and an occasional boat offshore luring the fish to the spear with white, down-thrown lamps. I had paused to look with amusement at a travel-poster showing the Tower of London as red as wine under an improbably blue English sky. The lights glistened on the raindrops sliding down it. "Yes!" I was thinking. "And I suppose outside Victoria station the rain is pelting posters of sunny Italy." A voice at my side said:

"E freddo stasera, signore."

He was a little man, with pansy-dark eyes. He was smiling an engaging smile. He wore a rain coat but no hat and he carried a brief-case. One glance at him and I was in no doubt that he belonged to a large and ancient Italian profession. Then, instead of asking me if I wanted a nice girl, he said comfortingly that the sun would shine again to-morrow, and then, in English:

"You are English, signore?"

I said, 'Yes,' because I have found in Italy that if I say I come from Ireland they either say, "Ah, yes! The dykes and the windmills!"; or else a haze comes over their eyes and I have to explain that Ireland is an island near England—which I find a little humiliating. Sometimes I choose to be an American and invent a home in Chicago or Minneapolis.

"I also have been in England," said the little man eagerly. "My sister lives in England. Near Bournemouth. Do you know Bournemouth, signore? I know it very well. And Poole. And Eastbourne." As he chattered on I began to wonder if he were a real professional. Perhaps he was merely an amateur who would presently produce picture-postcards, cheap coral brooches or American cigarettes from his little bag, and would mention girls only if all else failed. I fell into talk with him willingly. Bari is not an exciting city; the hours after dinner are the most lonely hours for a traveller; and, anyway, I have a sympathetic feeling for Italian pimps. They are not bad fellows. They are a race outside our world. They do not tempt us. We tempt them. They have no wish to harm us. They will merely assist us to

harm ourselves if we so desire. We are none of their business except in so far as our frightful wickedness is part of their line of business ; for all that these unfortunates know about us luckier ones is that we live in a cushioned world where it should be easy for everybody to be good but which, so far as they can see from their indifferent observation of it, is deplorably full of vice.

After a while I said, "Let's get out of this beastly wind and have a drink somewhere," and we began to walk past the Old Port towards the Corso, talking about Dorset. But he did not pause at the Corso, for he said kindly : "It is too expensive here. I know a good place," and led me onward into the dark and winding streets of the old town away behind the docks, until, in a particularly dark and narrow alley we came to a hole in a wall. It was a wineshop, arched, empty, brightly-lit. There we sat to a trestled table over a flask of acrid wine. We were alone.

"And what is your sister working at in England ?" I asked.

"Oh ! She is not working," he said proudly. "She is married to a wealthy paper-manufacturer."

"Really ?" I said, deciding that for to-night I would have to be at least a Sheffield steel-king.

"But it is true !" he assured me, instantly interpreting my look. "Veritably true ! She went there when she was eleven. Her name then was Federica Peruzzi. Now her name is Philpot."

He produced an envelope bearing an English stamp. The dove-grey paper was deckled, embossed with an address in Bournemouth, and signed Feredica.

"It happened so," he explained. "After the first War I and my sister were only small children. We lived in Altamura, up in the hills. We had nothing to eat. We came down to Bari because we heard the British navy was in the port." He shrugged and made a face of shame. "We were begging outside the big hotels on the seafront. What else could we do ? All I had to sell was one double-almond. As you know the double-almond brings luck. And," he cried, with a vast, baby-faced smile, "mine brought luck to me. For one night when a sea-captain came out of the Grand Hotel I offered him my double-almond. He took it. He looked at me. He looked at my sister. He looked and looked at her. And suddenly he began to weep. 'Signor,' I said, 'why are you crying ?' He took me aside and he began to ask me questions, but he could not take his eyes from my sister. I was very troubled for her. I was only fourteen and in Altamura they had said that we should find the big world in the valley a very wicked place."

Giancarlo wriggled apologetically with his whole body. He conveyed that he was not speaking of his own world.

"You see, I loved my little sister, and she was only eleven. But the Captain soon explained. His name was Captin Edgeworth.

He had lost his only child during the war, and he said that Federica was the living image of his Gladys who had died. And as he said this he became sad and wept again. I knew then that he was an honest man."

(Poor little Giancarlo! If our tears could make us honest . . .)

"The Captain gave me fifty lire and told us both to be at the hotel again the next morning at ten o'clock. Oh! What a meal we had that night! It is thirty-four years ago and never since have I eaten a better meal. Never, never, never as long as I live will I forget that meal. All night Federica could not sleep. She kept waking me up and crying out, 'Giancarlo! Our fortunes are made! The rich Englishman will take care of us for the rest of our lives.' But I said, 'Sleep, little one. We shall never see the Captain again. Let us be content with our fifty lire.'"

Clearly, so far, a true story. Those cries of hope were not invented. They could only have come out of the old Italian belief in magic, miracles, the wheel of fortune, the Totocalcio (their Football Pools), in short some *Deus ex Machina* who alone can change the hopeless reality of life.

"But I was wrong, signore. The Captain was waiting for us the next morning. He said, 'Now we go to Altamura.' We took the train into the hills. He slept that night in the one bed between me and my father, with Federica asleep at the tail of it. He ate our poor food: roasted herrings and dry bread. He trusted me with all his money. I could have run away with it all, but I did not touch one lire of it. He arranged between my father and a lawyer to adopt Federica, and to change her name to Edgeworth. The next day we returned to Bari and he took Federica with him to England. When he died he left her all his money. She met a Mr. Philpot and married him. Now she has two sons. One of them was fighting here in Italy during the war."

He drew out his wallet and showed me a crumpled family photograph: two youths, a very English-looking papa and a middle-aged woman full of Italian fat.

"And you?" I asked. "Did the Captain do anything for you?"

"Had I not given up my sister whom I loved? Of course, he gave me money. I travelled a little. I have even been to Rome. I became a valet to a rich American lady in Rome. But I was not happy with her. She was not young and she was not beautiful and she was always trying to make love to me. I could have married her and had all her money, but I was young and romantic, and I wanted real love. Once Federica brought me to Bournemouth. I was unhappy there too. I saw that she did not want me any more. I came back to Bari. I fell in love. I got married."

He removed his raincoat and showed me the tab. It bore the name and address of an outfitter in Piccadilly.

"Federica sent me this coat. Sometimes she sends me shirts and shoes. But never any money."

We had some more wine. He asked me about my life. I described to him my two steel-factories near Sheffield. He said he was gratified and honoured to know me. We talked of his life and with a shrug of self-contempt he gave me a glimpse into his brief-case: brooches of orange-pale coral, picture postcards, American cigarettes. I found that he sometimes gets jobs as a waiter. We talked of the Totocalcio. I bought a ticket for him from the padrone, and selected the teams, and wrote in his name. As I wrote in his name the sound of the wintry wind outside was one with his deep breathing into my ear.

"It will be lucky," he cried. "I know it! It will win a prize! Will it not, Giacomo?", turning to the padrone who merely lifted his shoulders and let them all again. We had some more wine. It was half-past eleven before we rose, and went out into the wind and the darkness. As we walked down the lane Giancarlo stopped and turned to me. I was afraid that he was going, at last, to ask me if I wanted a nice girl, and I dearly hoped he would not. When he did not I hoped that I understood why. We had drunk wine together, we had exchanged confidences, we were friends. How sensitive these Italians are, I thought! How warm-hearted! How responsive! How delicate-minded!

Just then the yellow light from a window fell on a dark-haired little girl of about eleven who had come dashing up to him, clasp- ing him about the knees, saying, "Mamma is looking for you!" He lifted her into his arms, and kissed her passionately. Then he turned slowly towards me, gazed at me in awe, and whispered:—

"This is Federica!" And to her, as if he were showing her the statue of a saint in church:—"Little one! This is a rich Englishman who has just arrived in Bari."

For one entranced moment the two of them gazed at me and by the child's wide eyes I knew that she had often heard poppa's fairy-tale. For that one moment, in that dark windswept alley, I knew what it feels like to be a God in a Machine. I almost had time to wish I really was a Sheffield steel-king. Then a gust of rain came blasting down on us. I realised poor Giancarlo's tragedy. A miracle had happened to him once. He had spent all his life waiting for it to happen again. I groped in my hip-pocket for a note and crumpled it into his fist, gripped his arm, said the hour was late, said my family was waiting for me at my hotel, cried *A rivederlà*. Just before I turned to walk rapidly away into the dark I saw the haze of rain glistening in the child's wind-tossed hair and a single drop shone on her sallow cheek.

Half an hour later I was lying in the warmth and comfort of my bed in the Grand Hotel delle Nazioni. Outside I could hear the sad slapping of the waves on the Lungomare, and the weeping moan of the Adriatic night.

L. A. G. STRONG

THE POSTMAN

THE SPRING MORNING WAS MILD AND FINE. MR. MANGAN AND I sat on two kitchen chairs outside his front door, and surveyed the scene at our ease. In front of us, the broken ground sloped gently to little fields, and thence to wide demesnes, beyond which the woods rolled like smoke towards Dun Laoghaire and the sea. Over the sea lay a haze, against which the spires of Dun Laoghaire stood up like surprised, milky flowers.

Smoke rose thin and straight from the cottages in the foreground, three children were playing with a barking collie, and a goat in the hedge strained at its tether, bleating, anxious to join in the fun.

Mr. Mangan smoked in benign and majestic silence. At the back of the house Mrs. Mangan was singing to herself and doing something to a tin pan. The peace that comes of a late breakfast had fallen on us, and the sounds of her activity emphasised it. We were well content.

A stocky figure on a bicycle came into view round a corner of the little lane that led to Mr. Mangan's house. The rider steered his way along the edges, to avoid the mud. Then, disapprovingly, he got off.

Mr. Mangan pulled out his watch. "Twenty to twelve," he grunted.

"Do you always get your letters as late as this?" I asked.

"Faith, this is early. There must have been two or three people away."

"Oh. It's like that, is it?"

"Seventeen houses on the way out, and in each one—good morning Jem!—in each one he stops for a bite and a chat. It's a wonder he gets here as soon, and he with his belly swelled with tea and soda-bread. Well, Jem, how are ye?"

The postman, sweating, pushed his cap back and leaned against his bicycle.

"Wore out I am," he proclaimed. "Them sales catalogues has me destroyed. If it's one I've handled to-day, it's thirty-five, and they a heavy weight on the bag."

"Well—what have ye for us?"

"One letter for you, and a ha'penny stamp for herself."

"No sales catalogue?"

"Ah, sure, there was hundreds of them. I couldn't carry

them all. I'll bring hers tomorrow."

"Take care there won't be a new lot then."

"If there is, it can wait till the next day."

"Any news, Jem?"

"Mrs. Kelly is after getting a telegram from her boy in America."

"What was in it?"

The postman looked shocked. "Sure, how would I know?"

"The same way as three score people know already," Mr. Mangan suggested.

The postman's face relaxed. It would be hard to say that he smiled, for his moustache was so large as to conceal the workings of his mouth.

"Well, then," he admitted. "I did hear tell it was the way he might be getting married."

"Is she a good Catholic?"

"I hope so, I'm sure," said the postman: and spoiled the effect of this aspiration by adding, "Ye'll be asking me next has she a mole on her back."

"Go on and deliver that ha'penny stamp where it belongs," said Mr. Mangan severely. "We don't want any of your loose conversation here."

Once more something happened under the postman's moustache. He said, surprisingly, "O.K.," and wheeled his bicycle round to the back of the house.

Mr. Mangan continued to smoke, but his eye had kindled in a way I knew to be propitious. Long experience has taught me the value of finding the right opening. I hesitated, then, looking away to the grey smudge of Howth, I said casually, "It must be hard to keep a secret in this place."

"Ye're right," said Mr. Mangan. "But," he added, "don't think it's a peculiarity of this island."

"I don't."

"It's well for you. Only the other day—d'ye know Clement's Inn?"

"Not very well. I know where it is."

"Well—I was reading only the other day—wait here till I fetch it out to you."

He went into the house, leaving me wondering what was coming next. A baby donkey appeared inquisitively round the corner of the lane, and eyed me for a full minute, its spindly fore-legs at an innocent angle. Deciding that I was harmless, it picked its way delicately along the edge of the puddles, blinking, and twitching its slender flank.

It stiffened to attention as Mr. Mangan reappeared, but he took no notice of it, so it remained where it was, and after a few

seconds began to nibble at the hedge.

Mr. Mangan sat down. In his hand was a shabby little leather-covered book. On the back, in faded characters, I could just make out "Famous Trials of . . ."—but the rest was rubbed away.

I stretched out a hand. Mr. Mangan withheld the book.

"Patience," he said. "Possess your soul in patience, till I tell you." He opened the book. "Did ye ever hear of Mr. James Newman?"

"Not to my knowledge."

"Will ye listen to him! Sure, anyone could tell ye'd been to a university. Ye're so damn cautious. Won't say anything one way or the other, for fear ye should be found out."

"All right, all right. I've never heard of him."

"Admits unqualified ignorance. That's better. Well. Mr. James Newman was a postman. He lived in a top back room in Clement's Inn. And to think you never heard of him. Well, well."

Mr. Mangan proceeded to make ironical noises until his humour was appeased.

"Mr. James Newman," he repeated, "was using his top back room in the year 1756. He likewise used a tavern not far off, where he would breakfast on little caraway-seed-cakes and gin mixed with small ale. Quite dainty in his eating, for the period, was Mr. James Newman. An inquisitive man, too. I'll let him talk to you in a minute.

"In the year 1756, as you, having enjoyed the inestimable benefit of a university education, will be well aware, George the Second was plodding through his undistinguished reign. He and his ministers saw fit to pretend that they were mighty indignant with the goings on of France—particularly in the West Indies, and more than ever since the peace of Aix-la-Chappelle in 1748. By the way, my man by the name of O'Keefe, I mean the man who shaves me and cuts my hair and resides in D'Olier Street, and is or was the light-weight champion of this island, took a horrible walloping from a policeman boxer at Aix last Monday night, and this after a great triumph at Dusseldorf, and another at Cologne. This interpolation is on the best Mrs. Nickleby principles, to sustain your interest. It has no connection with Mr. James Newman, and still less with Dr. Florence Hensey."

"And who the blazes is he?"

"Wait and I'll tell ye. It was the name Aix-la-Chappelle put the interpolation into my mind. When you and I grow rich, we will put up a statue at Clement's Inn to Mr. James Newman, with a suitable plaque to the greater glory of all postmen, and in the hope that the postmen of the future may be both better and

brighter.

"Now, Dr. Florence Hensey, of whom you, in spite of your education and opportunities, are most disgracefully ignorant—Dr. Florence Hensey was an Irishman, a Roman Catholic, and had taken what degrees he possessed at Leyden. This was no doubt due to the disbars, estoppals, torts, snarbery, and other hindrances prevailing in those days against all Catholics for fear they'd compete in the home market.

"Doctors with foreign degrees were at that time much favoured by the public, since they pretended they knew a great deal about the French Disease and the Neapolitan Fever. However, that has nothing to do with the present story.

"What has very much to do with it is that Dr. Florence Hensey had a brother over in Holland at the time, and used to write to this brother in the most innocent terms with ink, and in the most questionable terms with lime-juice, in between the lines.

"Well, George the Second was advised by his ministers to go to war against France. France joined herself with Prussia; and, as you know by dint of that excellent education of yours, there ensued the Seven Years' War."

At this point the postman came round from the back, wiping his moustache on the back of his disengaged hand.

"Can't stop. Must be getting on," he said importantly, and slung a stiff, rheumatic leg over his bike. He wobbled expertly down towards the lane, and the little donkey, after regarding him for a moment in bright horror, collected its spindly legs and scampered out of sight.

Mr. Mangan resumed.

"Dr. Florence Hensey, M.D., did a great business at Arundel Street with old beaux and beauties, whose skins were the worse for wear under their silks and periwigs as a result of the distempers aforementioned. In the course of his duties, the good Doctor would get an odd tip, and it was said that the French king sent him twenty-five guineas every quarter for information. He was arrested near the Merry Austin's Studio, and paraded before the Bar in Parliament; a most unusual proceeding, be it noted. And the principal witness for the Crown was the man from Clement's Inn, Mr. James Newman, of whom I sing.

"Listen to Mr. James Newman talking now. You are to see him in a brown short wig with a greasy bow at the nape of his neck. His coat is a nice cardinal red, with mighty big brass buttons all down the front. It is disfigured by tobacco stains and other stains, and it reaches—Beadle-like—to his knees. He has brown corduroy breeches, coarse grey worsted stockings, and his shoes are of the brogue variety, with brass buckles. His stock is invisible, and his collar is of black patent leather.

"There he stands at the Bar, principal witness for the Crown:

and here is how he talks." Mr. Mangan opened the book, cleared his throat, and read :—

"Says Counsel"—Mr. Mangan's voice boomed majestic—"Do you know the prisoner at the Bar, Dr. Hensey?"

"Yes," replies James." Mr. Mangan's voice crawled and wriggled. "Yes, sir, I know him very well. I have known him above eighteen months."

"Tell the court and jury what you know relative to Dr. Hensey."

"I have often received from the prisoner at the Bar letters to carry to the Office in Lombard Street, as I used to do other letters, until at length I began to suspect them."

"How came you to suspect the prisoner at the Bar of carrying on a treasonable correspondence?"

"When I have got all my letters together, I carry them home and sort them." (Think of it, man: carry them *home* and sort them.) "In sorting them, I observed that the letters I received of Dr. Hensey were generally directed abroad to foreigners, and I, knowing the Doctor to be a Roman Catholic, and, as I imagined, in the interest of the Pretender, I advised the Examining Clerk at the Office to inspect the letters, telling him that I had some suspicion that the writer of these letters was a SPY."

"Did you open any of these letters yourself?"

Mr. Mangan put the book down on his knee. "Remember where he lived," he said. "See him with a guttering candle, in his top back room at Clement's Inn, on a dank November evening, prying, peeping and sorting. And see the unsuspecting Dr. Hensey over beyond in Arundel Street, quaffing his sherry with a Jesuit, dressed maybe as a farmer and calling himself plain Mister. Let your imagination loose on that."

"No," replies our good James. "But I challenged one letter. It was about a secret expedition, and when it was opened at the Post Office"—he means, when it was previously steamed open at Clement's Inn—"and when it was found to be what it is, after that I received directions to bring every letter I received, whether from the Doctor or from that house, that it might be opened, and so I continued to do until the Doctor was taken up."

"How came you to know that Dr. Hensey was a Roman Catholic? What had you to do with his religion?"

"We letter-carriers or postmen have great opportunities to know the characters and dispositions of gentlemen in the several neighbourhoods of this part of the town, from their servants, connections and correspondence. But, to be plain, if I once learn that a person who lives a genteel life is a Roman Catholic, I immediately look on him as one who, by education and principle, is an inveterate enemy to my King, my Country, and the Protest-

ant religion.'

"Loud cheers," interpolated Mr. Mangan. "Up James—the psalm-singing, snotty little hypocrite. Does he remind you of anyone? No? What about the locksmith in *Barnaby Rudge*? Master Varden's apprentice? I expect Dickens may have come across Newman in some old law-book—maybe in this very one. In any case, the similarity is striking. But let us get back to business.

"You say you never opened one of the prisoner's letters. Why did you not?"

"The first letter which I challenged or suspected I held up in my hand to the candle, as I was sorting the letters one night, by which means I perceived that the body of the letter was wrote in French, and that it began with the word *Monsieur*. It being wrote in French increased my suspicion and determined me to challenge the letter.'

"Well, there you are."

Mr. Mangan put the book down again on his knee and stared at the landscape. I stared at it too, with a sense of real shock. I had become accustomed, in Mr. Mangan's company, to all manner of strange things: but the picture I had been seeing was so incredibly unlike our surroundings that the two worlds could not be brought together at all.

"The good Doctor was found guilty," went on Mr. Mangan, "though he was afterwards liberated. But what I wish to draw your attention to is the good postman. Fancy that idle, gin-soaked blackguard fiddling with Dolly Varden's letter. Fancy him gloating over Miss Mackery's letter written from Half Moon Street to her cousin in Middlesex, telling all the town scandal. Fancy his shrivelled, toothless gums, his little snapping yellow eyes, and he fumbling and peering and prying. The Model Postman! My King, My Country, and the Protestant Religion. Pah! No doubt he was a blasted little blackmailer too. Not that the good Doctor seems to have been much, either: selling the people he made his money out of. However, public and private morality is a relative thing, and this was the eighteenth century.

"But what put it all into my head," he continued, after a pause, "was this question of the vagaries of postmen. There's too many letters now for them to steam open, even if they had the wish. Yet it's surprising what a lot they know. And there's always telegrams. And telephone conversations.

"Ah, well." He got up. "We live in a world of progress. Talking of which, I'm expecting a parcel off the bus. Will ye come down with me to get it?"

And, restored to our proper century, we went down the lane.

THOMAS TULLY

UNCLE, I HATE YOU

IT WAS COOL AND QUIET IN THE TOP OF THE TREE AND HE WOULD have been content to linger there until dinner-time had he not turned suddenly on his dangerous perch and seen the men—his uncle and two others—down in the field.

They were moving about in the field as quietly and innocently as his Aunt Nell would lay knives and forks on the table and with them were the two lean greyhounds, Bitch and Bang, frozen white in the sun. At the sight of the dogs his foot, the one on the branch, began to tremble and a quiver of dread ran through his body because then he realised that the dogs were going to be baited.

He watched them for a few more minutes, then gloomily, his legs unsteady, he began to climb down.

He hadn't realised that he would be able to see the farm from the top of the tree or he would never have climbed it. It was all right so long as he couldn't see what they were doing. That's why he liked to get away from the farm in the afternoons, go down to the bog and throw bits of peat at the tadpoles, or perhaps go into Robertstown on an errand for his Aunt Nell, or do anything that took him away from the farm and the field behind it.

But now he had seen them and he had to go back, even though he already felt the stifling pity rising in his throat and the quick, alarming hatred of his Uncle creeping along his arms and legs into his stomach.

He dropped from the lowest branch onto a spongy mould of pine needles and emerged into the blanket of heat and began to hurry along the straight tow-path towards the canal bridge. He stopped at the head of the gravel slope to look at Nick Carter's patch of wheat, at the wide rent in the yellow sheaves where Carter's sow had escaped the other day and bulldozed amiably through them.

They hadn't found the sow yet. He thought of getting a stick and trying to find it. Then he felt the unseen pull from the direction of the farm and he trudged up onto the road and began to half-run, half-walk along the shady breen feeling his knees become weaker and the mist of gloom deepen in his mind as he neared the farmhouse.

He slowed down as he turned along the rutted cart-track and walked up through the out-buildings, in case Aunt Nell was at one of the windows and saw him running.

He couldn't see her, and leaping across the waste-ditch he

went slowly through a patch of drying turnips, past the big white-washed farmhouse to the boundary wire. From there he had a clear view of the men in the field.

They were moving about in the field like shimmering, brittle dolls in the bright sun: quiet, methodical, easy to look at.

His Uncle was just walking out from the edge of the field, his green trilby askew, his black gum boots rippling, glinting with light, carrying a wooden box with a gauze lid.

The other two men were holding the greyhounds back on short leads and he noticed that Bang was frisking and beginning to dance with excitement.

He shivered as his Uncle put down the box, took off the lid and lifted the hare out by its ears. At the sight of the hare Bang set up a hysterical, high-pitched yammer straining powerfully on his leash so that the man holding him was forced to give a little.

He felt his palms become hot and prickly as his Uncle dangled the twitching hare in front of the heaving dogs for a moment and then walked further away and laid the hare in the long grass.

Every time this happened he fully expected the hare to bound up and cut across the field to safety. It seemed the natural thing for a captured hare to do. It was only when he saw the hare struggling through the grass with a queer, lop-sided motion that he realised that its hind legs were broken.

Then it came surging through him, the black hatred of his Uncle. Frightening him because it made him sweat and tremble, because he knew it was wrong to hate his Uncle. He clutched the wire tightly with slithering hands, biting back the cry that came into his mouth as his Uncle stepped back and nodded to the men holding the dogs. The leads jerked loose and the whole morning seemed to fill with the catapulting greyhounds as they fell on the hare, Bang first, with shrill exultant barks and tossed it high in the air. As the body of the hare hung for a split second, grey and horribly limp against the bright sun, a cry of helpless rage and anguish tore from his lips, "Don't, don't!": then he jerked away and stumbled round the side of the farmhouse.

He leaned against the wall for a moment feeling sick and worried and waited for the violent trembling to stop. He didn't want Aunt Nell to see him like that.

When he felt calm enough he got up with a sigh and went into the house through the backdoor.

He found his Aunt in the kitchen standing up in a low tin bath dousing herself with cold water from the sink. It made him hot to see her like that and he stared curiously at her as she tipped a basin above her head and water coursed over her shoulders, ran down her thighs and legs into the bath.

He liked Aunt Nell very much. She was little, with short black hair through which her small white ears showed like bits of clear marble. And her face was much finer than any face he had seen during the holiday. She was calm too, and gentle, and she

treated him like a grown up, even though he was only twelve years old, talking to him for long periods in a quiet, sincere voice. She was such a contrast to his big energetic Uncle and really nothing like his mother. He had noticed that whenever his Uncle went into the field with the dogs, Aunt Nell always stayed in the house.

Now that he was alone with her there was suddenly a lot he wanted to talk about. He was going home on Monday and there were a few things he had to get off his chest before then.

He watched her for a moment, and asked suddenly: "Will Uncle Jim need to bait the greyhounds any more after to-day?"

His Aunt stopped wringing her hair but she didn't turn round. After a minute she said: "Ye shouldn't be watchin' them."

"It's only because they're not used to the hare, isn't it?" he went on quickly. "He won't need to bait them when they're used to it." He had to know. He had to make sure before he went home.

"Sure he won't," Aunt Nell smiled, rubbing herself briskly.

He thought she looked very white and smooth and healthy.

"It's just so's they'll tear like the divil after the owl electric lad when they get on the track."

"Does it hurt a hare much when its leg is broken?" he asked trying to sound as casual as he could.

Aunt Nell stepped quickly out of the tin bath and padded across the stone-slugs to the inner-room. "And how would I know?" she chuckled. "When I've never troubled to ask 'em.

"Are ye glad to be going home?" his Aunt inquired.

"Well, I miss my mother, a bit," he said, looking at the trail of small puddles she had left.

"Ah, they all miss the mudder!" said his Aunt.

He tried to think about going home but his thoughts wandered hopelessly back to Uncle Jim and the greyhounds. "What does Uncle Jim——?" he began, breaking off as he heard his Uncle's voice outside. Then the latch rattled and a thick-set, friendly-looking man stomped in.

"Don't be bringin' the Gormans in here!" his Aunt shouted in alarm. "I'm as naked as a jay."

"The Gormans are off home," his Uncle chuckled. "Who's going' to look at you anyway?"

As his Uncle sat down to pull off the big gum-boots he stared steadily at his wide handsome face, the skin tanned a rich brown and just going leathery through working too much in the open. And the face lifted and caught him looking at it and one shrewd brown eye winked solemnly at him. He smiled freely back, amazed that he should be glad to smile at someone whom he had hated so passionately a little while ago. Now he looked at his Uncle and thought of him only as a man with a quick, blatant laugh and seemingly boundless energy, who would race him to the farmhouse or take him fishing or teach him how to catch turf. It was queer how he could forget about the hares like that.

"What were ye roarin' at outside?" his Uncle said.

Startled, he said nothing.

"Just lettin' off the high spirits, eh?" said his Uncle mildly.

"Will ye be glad to go home, lad?"

His stomach tightened defensively. They had both asked him that and he wondered if they suspected anything. He *could* tell them that it had been a wonderful holiday, that he would love to come next year.

But he was frightened by these tremors of hate and pity that exhausted him when the hares were being torn to pieces. He knew it would be the same next year if he came, and that eventually they would find out, and sooner or later his parents would get to know about it.

"I don't mind going home," he answered slowly, "but I shan't like going back to school again."

"Sure ye don't know what's best for ye. I wish I was still at school," his Uncle said wryly.

He laughed at that because his Aunt had told him that Jim had run away from school when he was only nine. He thought that his Uncle must have been very daring when he was a boy.

He was feeling better now and ran to fetch the bucket when Aunt Nell put her head into the kitchen and asked him to go down to the well. As he went out banging the door behind him he heard his Uncle say: "Ye look better without the clothes."

He went quickly around the house and along the cart-track not looking at the field where they had baited the dogs. He took his time on the way to the well, stopping at the canal bridge to look down at the slow dull water, imagining he could see big grey fish nosing up from the depths.

He did want to see his mother and father again, and there was the long ride in the train back to Belfast to look forward to.

Aunt Nell had said that Uncle Jim wouldn't need to bait the greyhounds after to-day. He was racing them at Naas on Monday, which was the day after to-morrow and Aunt Nell had said that if the dogs lost they wouldn't have any more because she was fed up with Jim spending money on dogs which never won. But he wanted to hear his Uncle say it, that if the dogs didn't win there would be no more greyhounds, and no more hares. Then he could look forward to coming again next year—if they would let him—and run about in the field behind the farm as if it was any other field and not have to get away from it so as he wouldn't see the hares being chewed up by the dogs. If he could be sure of that then he could go home with his mind settled. Aunt Nell didn't think the dogs would win anyway.

When he got back, puffing a little with the pail of clear water, the big yellow table in the main room of the farmhouse was laid for dinner—a pan of dark steaming meat, potatoes boiled in their jackets, cold cabbage and plenty of brown bread.

His Uncle smiled and said: "Here's the great worker!" and

Aunt Nell thanked him for getting the water and he sat down feeling suddenly hungry and wondering how he could bring up the subject of greyhounds without seeming too eager.

They ate in silence for a while in the wide, clean-smelling room, because his Uncle didn't say anything or answer anything until he had worn the edge off his appetite.

Suddenly his Uncle jabbed his fork decisively at Aunt Nell. "I'm puttin' me money on Bitch. Ould Bang's not a patch on her but I'll put him in. He might bump the other dogs a bit."

His Uncle peeled another potato and went on: "I'm not too satisfied with Bitch though. She hasn't got enough divil in her. She wants to be away much quicker, fly like hell out of the trap!"

He kept his eyes on his plate and put down his fork, not feeling like food any more.

"Gorman thinks she's good," his Uncle said, winking at Aunt Nell. "He knows the dogs that she'll be up against on Monday. He says that once she's slaughtered a few more hares, then she'll win."

"You'll be going out tonight, then?" his Aunt said.

"Aye!"

"Where?"

"Denton's field. He's moved his cows so we're taking a couple of the lads out with a net. I wouldn't put her in the race the way she is."

"That 'ud be yer best bet anyway!" his Aunt said sharply.

He looked at his Uncle's face as he frowned and said: "Ah, don't be like that, Nell. Sure don't ye see that if Bitch wins and we sire her with Bang we'll be able to sell the pups all over the place."

He saw his Aunt's face flush and her lips move soundlessly as though she was reluctant to speak to Uncle Jim in front of him. Feeling his legs beginning to tremble and his cheeks to burn he stood up suddenly and blurted: "I've had enough thanks. I'm going down to the crab-apple tree." Then he hurried out with lowered eyes.

He sat for a long time astride the first branch of the crab-apple tree looking out over the serrated contours of the bog. And by the time the sun had risen over the top of the tree, glinted sharply down through the leaves for a while and then fallen behind him, he had worried himself sick.

His Uncle had gone out at night with some men twice before since he had come to the farm and when he had asked his Aunt about it she had seemed not to want to tell him. Then she had told him how hares made their nests in hollow tufts of grass in the open fields, and that at night when the hares were asleep a couple of men came up the field making a noise to frighten the hares down to the other end where there were more men waiting with nets.

Even that way he knew the hares had a chance to escape, but

not in Denton's field. Denton's field was separated from another field by a shallow river which was spanned by an old broken bridge. They would tie a net over one end of the bridge and drive the hares towards it and of course the hares would make for the bridge being their favourite avenue of escape and blunder into the net.

It seemed a bad way of catching anything as it was done in the dark. But what made him feel terribly frightened and sick and depressed was the thought that he had to start back to-morrow and he would be in the farmhouse getting packed and washed when the baiting started.

He jumped down off the tree and began to run further into the bog towards the evening sun which now threw a soft yellow light over the neat heaps of drying turf. He ran fast, jumping briskly over pieces of turf, trying to shake off the thought that he might even see the hare's slender hind legs being broken.

When he returned to the farmhouse, a lavender dusk had fallen, and he had heard Aunt Nell calling him for some time.

She was waiting anxiously at the end of the cart-track. He went up to her and she smoothed the hair out of his eyes with her small soft hand. "Ye feel very hot," she said, feeling his forehead. "Where have ye been till this time. Have ye been runnin' about or somethin'? Do you not feel well?"

"I feel all right, honest, Aunt Nell." Then he said: "Aunt Nell, are you going out tonight with Uncle Jim?" He thought she frowned but he couldn't quite see her face in the dark.

"Not on yer life!" she said. "I'll be in bed like a dacent woman. Which is where you're goin' now, me buck!"

He was glad that his Uncle wasn't in the house and he washed and got into bed as quickly as he could.

As he watched his Aunt fixing his blankets she reminded him so much of his mother that he nearly burst out with all his worry. But he just didn't know where to start.

She gave his pillow a final pat and then stood looking at him in the yellow glow of the oil lamp, her eyes dark and serious. Then she smiled and said: "Try and get to sleep, because the min' will be comin' over soon and then ye'll never drop off. Ye'll have a long day travellin' to-morrow remember."

"Are you going to bed in a minute, Aunt Nell?"

"Sure I am. Good night now." She doused the lamp and went softly out of the room.

After a minute he sat up and clasped his knees. His whole body felt tired, there was a pleasant sort of ache in his legs, but he knew he would never go to sleep, until something, he didn't know what, had happened.

Later his legs grew hot under the quilt and he got out and roamed around the room looking out of the window once or twice. Then he shivered and got back into bed and lay on his back staring up into the darkness where he thought he saw a pair of tall luminous greyhounds nuzzling something in a field.

He tried to think of the time when he would have to start back for his own home, and he felt his face round his eyes grow hot. He drew his fingers across his eyes and his fingers came away moist.

Hours later it seemed, he heard the first of the men arrive and a muffled murmur of voices start up from the outer room. Three more times he heard the latch rattle and his Uncle's voice rise in greeting and the murmuring grew louder until it filled his mind completely. He realised then that he wasn't just lying and listening to it, but that every fibre of him waited on the moment when the men rose up and went out into the night.

Soon after the fourth man came, the voices swelled suddenly and the chairs scraped back, and he felt his body stiffen. Then after a lot more talking and bumpings the voices seemed to squeeze gradually out of the house and begin to fade away down the cart-track. He heard Aunt Nell chuckle faintly outside and call softly: "Watch out, now." Then the door closed.

As soon as he heard his Aunt's bedroom door close he threw back the blankets and dived down to the bottom of the bed and began to squeeze his shirt on over his pyjama jacket. He struggled into his trousers, legs trembling, teeth chattering, muttering fiercely to himself. It was hard to lace his shoes in the dark with fingers that behaved as if they didn't belong to him.

When he was dressed he listened for a moment and then groped over to the window. A few seconds later he dropped lightly to the ground outside the window.

The whole countryside was still and bathed in silver under the naked summer moon. The sky near it looked like brittle dark-blue glass smudged with frosty looking stars. But the night was warm and quiet and the voices of the men, laughing and talking loudly, came clearly back on the cart-track. He waited till the voices died away then he fearfully leapt the waste ditch and began to pick his way along the cart-track.

Out on the road he heard the voices of the men again and he began to trot along close to the hedge, breathing deeply and frightened to death, not knowing what he was going to do, only that he must follow the men and somehow release the hard fluttering lump inside him.

Rounding a bend in the road he saw the men for an instant before they vanished suddenly as if the ground had swallowed them. He darted swiftly through the moonlight across the road and found further on a gap in the tall hedge.

He struggled through and came out on the edge of a wide field. Here and there were the black humps of sleeping cattle. About fifty yards across the field he could see the party of men. One of them whacked one of the humps with a stick and their laughter coming loud and clear on the still air bewildered him for a moment as it seemed so out of place.

When they had faded into the dark-blue night haze he began

to cross the field slowly, almost on tip-toe as he passed each slumbering mound. Soon he heard the tinkling bubble of water over a stony bed and then he saw the old stone bridge, pale white under the moon, and he knew that beyond was Denton's field. He couldn't see any of the men so he thought that they must have crossed the bridge and he walked down the side of the field to the far end. He bent slightly and crept towards the bridge, straining his eyes in case one of the men was lying in the grass. When he was about ten yards from the bridge he saw the net, the ends draped loosely over the parapets, completely enclosing the end nearest him.

He stared at the net, catching his breath at the nearness of it. It was almost invisible in the moonlight, a thin net like wire mesh, waiting insidiously to drop at the slightest touch. He moved towards it hypnotically, his hands flickering out to touch it, when a crescendo of voices rose suddenly from the dark depths of the field, punctuated by the swishing and smacking of sticks.

The beating had begun and suddenly there was unseen menace coming up the field, coming to strike him with hard heavy sticks and he backed away from the bridge suddenly afraid of being caught out at that time of night by his Uncle. But after a few paces he stopped, his eyes glued to the net in fearful fascination. He had to see, no matter how much it hurt him.

A few seconds later he heard a faint rustle in the grass beyond the bridge and almost simultaneously two low black shapes pattered across the bridge and smacked into the net with terrific force. The net sailed wildly and collapsed and then a shapeless mass was floundering grotesquely in the middle of the bridge, twisting and twirling like a black pool of water. Two more hares, then another and another swerved wildly away from the threshing heap, cut along the side of the parapet and flashed past him with little zips through the grass.

For a moment he stared wide-eyed, his limbs paralyzed, listening to the muffled squeaks and grunts coming from the wriggling bundle on the bridge. Then something seemed to snap inside him and aware only of the painful thumping of his heart he stumbled on to the bridge, grasped the bundle of net and hare and heaved upwards with all his strength. He grabbed blindly for the end of the net, expecting one of the men to jump onto the bridge at any moment. His heart jumped with relief as the net lightened suddenly and the hares dropped to the grass and bounded away almost between his legs.

As he flung the net wildly from him and turned for his life, something crashed into his calves with numbing force, staggered across the bridge and sprawled with a soft bump against the parapet.

With the shouts of the men much nearer now he stooped and groped in the shadows for the hare. His fingers touched warm

fur and he felt a tiny quick pumping against the palm of his hand which seemed to tingle up his arm and bury itself in his heart. Almost sobbing with fear and pity he clutched up the unconscious hare as another went sputtering past him across the bridge, and stuffed it in his jacket.

Then he was off across the field, his heart skidding wildly, conscious only of the warm lump under his jacket against his chest. His breath squeezed painfully through clenched teeth and his arms clutched the hare possessively as if to ward off the heavy sticks, the sharp white teeth of the dogs. And he was thinking crazily of going calmly home on Sunday and of coming back next year and playing in the sunny field, loving his Aunt and not hating his Uncle.

Once he had stumbled across the field and struggled frantically through the gap in the hedge he paused on the road and listened. Hearing no sounds of pursuit he sighed deeply and began to trot back along the road.

He pulled the lapel of his jacket aside and looked at the hare. He didn't really know what to do with it. It was still clinging to his chest where he had stuffed it, the long thin ears flat in terror along its head, the small eyes fixed and dark. He raised his hand wonderingly to touch the ears and then a slithering noise on the road behind him dried up his mouth and whirled him round with a half uttered cry.

It was Strike, his Uncle's lean alsatian, its nose lifted and nudging the air as it loped curiously behind him.

He moistened his lips, murmuring: "Go on, Strike, get away."

The dog lifted its long dark muzzle and sniffed delicately and he realised that it could smell the hare.

"Shoo, Strike!" he whispered, clutching the hare tightly and hurrying alone. The dog caught up with him and loped at his side, its snout still nuzzling the air. Then, to his utmost surprise, it butted him strongly in the hip and he staggered and sprawled on the grass verge.

He slithered back on his behind whimpering a little as Strike came nuzzling at his chest and rooted roughly in his jacket.

"Get away!" he gasped and jerked up his foot catching the dog a glancing blow on the nose.

Strike growled and gave a small throaty bark to show that it knew where the hare was and thought that he should surrender it.

The dog growled again and suddenly put its paws on his chest, one of them right on the hare. At that Strike put his head on one side and whimpered. Then he stripped his teeth and began to dance around and around him, growling softly. He pivoted round on his buttocks lungeing at the dog and feeling silly.

He was beginning to blubber with creeping fright and rage when close beside him, startling and unreal, he heard the voice of Aunt Nell. "Come here, Strike. Come on, Boy."

He looked up and saw the small figure of his Aunt standing

in the road. He strained his eyes to see her face as the dog pranced up to her and she put her fingers in its collar.

He got to his feet and stood swaying before her with his hair in his eyes but still clutching the bulge of warmth under his jacket and feeling as if he had been caught stealing green apples from the loft.

He flinched from her as she came up to him.

"I'm not going to hit ye," his Aunt said softly, smoothing his hair back from his eyes. "'Twas a good thing I looked in yer room wasn't it? What do ye want to go rushin' about in the dark for?" She looked down at his hugging arms from which one long grey ear protruded stiffly. "Better give us the hare and we'll get back to the house before yer Uncle sees ye."

He kept hugging the hare and whispered: "What are you going to do with it, Aunt Nell?"

"It'll be all right. Put it down on the grass."

"But Aunt I——"

"Put it down now." His Aunt's voice was firm but reassuring.

He took out the hare from under his warm jacket and laid it gently down. It moved its hind legs once as if to make itself more comfortable and remained crouching in the grass.

"It's frightened," his Aunt said. She was having a hard job to hold the bucking and screaming dog.

"Now get away from it," she ordered.

He looked from the yammering dog down at the dark blob of the hare in the grass. He didn't think Aunt Nell would cheat him. Yet he didn't like to walk away and leave it so unprotected. "Are you going to give it to Uncle Jim?" he said uneasily.

"No, just get away and wait a minute."

He hesitated and backed away still feeling insecure and unpleasantly suspicious of his Aunt. He fought down his doubt and prayed to the hare to get up and run away, so that he could stop feeling suspicious.

For a few moments the hare remained squatting in the grass like a black stone. Then, unexpectedly, it made a short sharp rush away from them. Then it made another and another, stopping each time as if doubting that it could go free. He urged it on under his breath and his heart seemed to settle hugely inside him as it slithered further and further away, gave a final hop and disappeared in the shadows beneath the hedge.

His Aunt seemed to sigh and released the grip on Strike's collar. The dog plunged around them crying shrilly and hurled itself into the hedge and crashed away through the undergrowth, snorting with anger.

Aunt Nell chuckled softly. "He'll never catch that feller." Then she put her arm around his shoulders and led him gently up the road to the farmhouse. Behind them, faintly, they heard the men coming back across the fields.

He felt suddenly limp and exhausted and blindly pillowed his

head on his Aunt's soft breast. He couldn't understand her silence and her lack of interest in what he had been doing. It was almost as if she knew, or could guess, anyway. Almost without thinking he murmured: "I let some hares out of the net."

"You're a naughty boy," his Aunt said evenly.

He looked up at her face but in the dark it told him nothing. But he didn't think she was angry, even though his Uncle wouldn't be able to bait Bitch to-morrow. A thought jumped alarmingly into his mind. "I suppose Uncle will catch some hares to-morrow," he said casually, as they were going along the cart-track.

"In the broad daylight?" his Aunt said. "I'd like to see 'em."

He breathed deeply and settled his head again. His mind felt cool and happy now and gradually there came upon him the shame of getting up at an outlandish time of night and chasing over the countryside after a lot of men with a net. But the dread of going home was gone and a warm feeling of affability towards his Uncle was coursing pleasantly through him.

He just wondered though whether his Aunt considered him as a silly, annoying little boy as a result of this escapade. As they went into the house he said politely: "Will you ask mum if I can come next year. That is if you and Uncle Jim don't mind?"

"Ask her yerself," his Aunt said, piloting him towards the bedroom. "Then ye can write and tell us what she ses."

Hours later it seemed, and faintly, as though through the folds of a dark soft blanket he heard his Uncle come in, heard his exasperated and incredulous voice from a great distance. "We tried Denton's field. Then we had a go at McHugh's, but we couldn't catch a blinkin' thing!" He heard his Uncle laugh ruefully. "I wouldn't waste me money with the pair of 'em now. Nick, would ye like to buy a pair of whippets?"

He sighed and loosened his body with a contented stretch, hoping sleepily that his mother wouldn't be too punctual at Belfast so that he could take a good look at all the ships in the harbour.

THE LAW AND THE PROPHETS

THE PRISONER WAS IMPRESSED BY THE SIZE AND UGLINESS OF THE place even before the great door was swung open by a warder, and when he entered and saw a gate within, and another beyond, he realised that he must be a dangerous criminal indeed.

The two Civic Guards who had accompanied him from Ballyhoney looked strange and inimical in these steely surroundings, no longer the country lads who had given him tea and cigarettes on their journey. As they mentioned to the warder the big word that was tied like a label around his neck they assumed discipline and importance.

He was taken from them, led through gates with large locks, through doors, through corridors ; his name—Myles Mongan—was inscribed in books, his fingers smeared with black and rolled on paper ; he was stared at, whispered of ; strange hands gripped his biceps and led him on, and after a considerable time he was brought to a cell where he was left alone.

He sat on the small bed there, not thinking particularly, but feeling bewildered. He was a man of fifty-two, rugged and hairy, upright in bearing, brown-faced and healthy, a tinker descended from generations of tinkers, a landless, homeless man, adrift on the roads of Ireland. Three days before at the fair of Ballyhoney, he had sold a horse ; he and his wife Mary had gone to Gallagher's public house for a drink. The drink supplied by Mr. Gallagher to tinkers on fair days had, as he said, "a lift to it." At 10.45 p.m. in the course of an argument, the purport of which was now obscure to him, Myles Mongan had struck his wife an almighty blow which brought her head into violent contact with a spiked railing, and he had soon afterwards been informed by the law that he was a murderer.

This did not seem sensible to him. He had been fond of his wife, had frequently struck her in the past without any legal consequences. That this unfortunate dispute should be a matter of interest to gentlemen so exalted and busy as the Attorney-General surprised him further.

The door of his cell opened and a tall, well-made, red-faced man entered, a warder with a mug of tea.

"You'll be Mongan," he stated. Mongan nodded. "Well, don't look so sour about it. You'd think nobody ever done a murder before. If I'd a pound for every man I saw go to the gallows!"

Mongan found this approach refreshing. Since the unlucky

blow he had been regarded with fear and distrust by all he had met, as though sending the soul of his wife to eternity had dehumanised his own soul for ever.

"Aye, there's a lot of them come here the same way—no sperrit left, no pride, do you know; but after a few days it's wonderful the way they begin to perk up; getting self-important, do you see, with all the short-timers staring at them. It won't be long till you're the cock of the walk here. Sure there's nobody in the same class since they hanged poor Cleneghan last week, God rest his soul."

"Amen," said Mongan piously.

"There's a couple of big blackmarket fellows and an embezzler, and a couple of manslaughters, company directors they call themselves, but between you and me and the bedpost their noses will be sadly out of joint be this time tomorrow. Was it poison?"

"Oh, God forbid."

"I'm glad. Sure, poison is only a mean, tricky kind of a murder. It was the wife, I believe?"

It was, God be good to her," Mongan said, and the warder raised his cap. "I don't know rightly how it began. A bit of a push I gave her and her head hit something. God knows the law is a queer yoke."

"It's true for you. You'll have a good solicitor and barrister engaged, I'll warrant."

"Yerra, where would I get the money for the like of them? I've nothing between myself and the scaffold this minute only the mercy of God."

This was what the warder had been playing for. He was an ex-policeman named Tom Geraghty, a kindly man enough, fond of his bottle, willing to do a good turn if he was sure of recompense, venal in small matters, honest in great. He had for some years had a working arrangement with a solicitor of a repute which could not be termed dubious, since there was no doubt about it, and a barrister of small practice. This had been greatly to their mutual advantage. Many rural persons brought to the great prison on capital or other serious charges were unaware of the paternal interest taken in them by the State, and it was Tom Geraghty's practice to inform them of their rights. Mongan seemed a suitable subject.

"When a man has his neck in a noose, saving your presence, there's only one thing that's any use to him," he said.

"A good confession and a firm purpose of amendment?" said Mongan helpfully.

"Arrah, you're not that far gone at all, man. No. The thing a man in that condition needs more than avnthing else is a good solicitor and a good counsel. Do I make myself clear?"

"You should have great experience," said Mongan.

"I have. And a man that was wanting a good solicitor, the best solicitor, and a good counsel, the best counsel, couldn't go further than certain men that I could mention if I had a mind to."

"I wouldn't doubt you."

"Now, there's a very eminent solicitor by the name of," he paused impressively, "by the name of James Francis Xavier Connors. You've heard of him?" Mongan mendaciously nodded his head. "He has an office the size of the Kingsbridge Railway Station and a staff of clerks the like of a bank. Now, he'd be the man I'd engage."

"I've no doubt you would. But didn't I tell you I haven't a tosser."

In careful reply to which, Geraghty explained the system by which solicitor and counsel are assigned to those unable to pay their defence, explained that in addition to enjoying the confidence of the eminent solicitor, J. F. X. Connors, he had the good fortune to be acquainted with Seymour Moynihan, the distinguished ornament of the Irish Bar. With these two men assisting him Mongan might already consider himself a free tinker, with the roads of Ireland waiting impatiently for his familiar tread.

Mongan rose from the bed and shook Geraghty warmly and gratefully by the hand.

James Francis Xavier Connors had been admitted a solicitor in the year 1910, but he had not built what his obituary would describe as a "large and lucrative practice." Indeed, if building be the correct metaphor, it might be said that his practice resembled a diminutive and semi-ruinous mud-cabin. His palatial offices spread their ample carpets only in the mind of Tom Geraghty, and his most usual fee for appearing in the courts of inferior jurisdiction was the sum of two shillings and sixpence, or two bottles of stout, whichever was the more readily forthcoming. He was unimpressive in physique and the fact that he had not, as yet, misappropriated any of his clients' money was due principally to the fact that none had been entrusted to him. His Court manner was pompous and consciously hollow, and such triumphs as he won were the result of a kind of contemptuous pity from the bench.

Only when dealing in matters of life and death was he in a position to instruct counsel, and his choice on such occasions was invariably Seymour Moynihan, a man who had "drunk himself out of the finest practice in Ireland," who "could have been Chief Justice today if he'd watched his step." In this, as in most myths, there was some truth. He had been young, hopeful and brilliant, who now was old, bitter and drunken. He had been an orator in the great *nisi prius* tradition; now his periods were ornate and sententious, trying to the judge, ludicrous to the jury, laughable to the press. A settled melancholy and the ineffectual anodyne of drink had produced this broken Cicero.

Seeing this curious pair appear in court for assignment, many

a judge had found time to wonder at the gullibility of men, facing the uncertain gulf of eternity, entrusting their lives to so precarious a bridge.

Myles Mongan, to whom a small market-town was a metropolis, found nothing odd about his proposed solicitor and counsel when they were introduced to him by Tom Geraghty. The shine at elbow and shoulder-blade, the missing button, the frayed cuff had no message for him since he had no standard of comparison, and when Seymour Moynihan, large and heavy and old, filled the cell with his rich, alcoholic voice it seemed that here indeed was the great counsellor of Tom Geraghty's imagination.

The barrister took Mongan step by step through his story, counted with him the number of drinks he had received from Mr. Gallagher, elicited a statement of regard and esteem for the deceased, and warned him to keep a silent tongue in his head at the preliminary investigations at the District Court.

"And do not allow this gloomy environment to weigh upon your spirits or tempt you to the sin of despair," he said departing. "Mr. Connors and I, you may be assured, my dear Mongan, will have nothing but your interests at heart until we have restored you to liberty and the pursuit of those itinerant joys from which you have been illiberally and, if I may say so, so improperly—ah—subducted." And he followed his stomach from the cell, leaving as comfort to Myles Mongan a cloud of unfamiliar words and the familiar aroma of Irish whiskey.

Depositions were taken at the District Court at Ballyhoney, drab proceedings in a drab and dreary room. To Myles Mongan it was unreal. His life was among whey-headed women, piebald horses, the long-toothed rain, and as he sat daily in the little courthouse his thoughts were of the feckless days of cart and caravan, and when he was returned for trial to the Central Criminal Court it meant little to him, except that the two brilliant lawyers could now watch his interests more closely.

The two brilliant lawyers were duly assigned to his defence, a copy of the Depositions and the Indictment was made available to them, and they happily prepared for a lengthy murder trial, in the course of which every one of the ninety-seven witnesses who were being brought from Ballyhoney would be exhaustively cross-examined.

Two days before the case was listed for hearing young Mr. Maguire, of the Chief State Solicitor's Office, telephoned to Mr. Connors. "This is about the Mongan case," he said. "I've been talking to the Attorney."

"Yes?" said Mr. Connors.

"Between ourselves, and under your hat, he doesn't think the murder rap will stand up, and after reading the Depositions I'm inclined to agree with the old man for once."

"Yes," said Mr. Connors.

"So, off the record and all that, we'll be prepared to accept

a plea of manslaughter. Will you get in touch with the big man and tell him? ”

J. F. X. Connors gave a mumble into the telephone, hung up in disgust and put on his worn overcoat to go to the Law Library.

Walking rapidly down the wintry Quays he reviewed the situation. A murder trial with an almost inevitable acquittal at the end of a week or ten days had been an excellent proposition from the point of view of both business and prestige. His name and Moynihan's would have been on the front page of the newspapers each evening, and a suitable cloud of dust and smoke would have disguised the fact that the outcome of the trial was predestined. The fees allowed by the State on assignment were not gaudy, yet more than either he or Moynihan could hope to earn by any other means—they represented, in fact, cases of whiskey, crates of stout, shelves of good food. Now, through the irresponsible whim of the Attorney-General, all this was to be exchanged for the familiar shallows and miseries. A mere plea of Guilty to Manslaughter carried a fee as parsimonious and unimaginative as the crime itself. Ah, for the brave generosity of Murder.

He pushed through the gowned crowd into the Law Library, had Seymour Moynihan called, and told him of the shabby trick proposed by the Attorney-General. Seymour Moynihan, who always wore his wig and gown whether he was briefed or not, so as to give the impression that he was working, pulled irritably at his linen bands.

“The thing is palpably absurd,” he said. “Monstrous in fact. Are we to allow poor Mongan to go through life branded as a criminal, bearing the mark of Cain on his innocent brow? Nay. Not so. We have a duty to our client, a duty to society itself. Mongan shall not live so marked and branded. Never shall it be said that Seymour Moynihan failed to break a lance in defence of the right. Think of the fee, Connors. Think of the fee if we plead. Four-four. Monstrous. Ring that young man, Connors, and tell him we fight. Not for us the primrose path of *nolle prosequi*.” And Mr. Connors, thinking of the diminutive fee of four guineas, went away to ring Mr. Maguire at the Chief State Solicitor's Office.

The case opened at Green Street Courthouse on a churlish, February day. The wind, still sea-salt after its passage over the city roof-tops, encircled the harsh old building, and Myles Mongan in the great dock in the centre of the Courthouse was grateful in his tinker's heart for the central heating.

Leading for the State was Newsome Kennedy, an undistinguished, but reliable Senior, who was accompanied by a brand new Junior in a shiny white wig. Neither was so impressive as Seymour Moynihan, looking in his aged wig and gown like a grandfather seagull.

On the bench was Mr. Justice Brennan, a new political appointment whose Bar practice had been entirely on the Chancery

side. It was his first criminal trial and his first experience of criminal matters outside the covers of the text books. The ninety-seven witnesses for the State were called, and proved what everyone soon knew, that Myles Mongan had struck his wife in a drunken rage at the fair of Ballyhoney, and that in falling she struck her head on a spiked railing and subsequently died. Examination in chief and cross-examination went interminably on, the jury nodded sleepily in the heat, Myles Mongan was called and told his story, the whitewigged junior closed for the State and Seymour Moynihan—who fearing a premature conclusion had deliberately refrained from asking for a Direction at the close of the State case—closed for the defence. His Lordship summed up at agonising length, reading from his notebook everything the ninety-seven witnesses had said. He addressed the jury on the law, he made profound observations on the sanctity of human life, and he dismissed them to their deliberations.

Twenty-three minutes later they returned with a verdict of Guilty.

Then there was trouble and great commotion. The Attorney-General rang the Chief State Solicitor; the Chief Commissioner of the Civic Guards rang the Attorney-General; the Chief State Solicitor rang Newsome Kennedy asking why the charge had not been reduced, this one rang that one and that one rang another. It was agreed that Messrs. Moynihan and Connors must never again be assigned to a criminal case; it was agreed that Mr. Newsome Kennedy and his juvenile junior must never again prosecute in a criminal case; it was agreed that Mr. Justice Brennan must never again adjudicate in a criminal case, but at the end of all this agreement one obstinate fact remained. Mr. Myles Mongon, itinerant tinsmith, had been condemned to death in due form.

Seymour Moynihan was disbarred, James Francis Xavier Connors was struck from the rolls, Tom Geraghty was sacked. Myles Mongan, knowing nothing of his interference in these distinguished lives, played Forty-five in the condemned cell.

In granting his application for leave to appeal, kindly arranged for him by the Attorney-General, their three Lordships of the Court of Criminal Appeal had some rather harsh things to say about the farming of the Indictment, the trial, and their learned brother Brennan J. They left the readers of the daily news-sheets with the impression that Myles Mongan was the victim of some gigantic and inhuman conspiracy, that he was entitled as of right to the large sum which was soon collected by popular subscription, that he was well away from the world of uniforms and gowns and wigs and ensnaring documents; and who will say that this was wrong?

A month later Myles Mongan had a new caravan and a new wife. Once again it was fair day in Ballyhoney; once again the tinkers were there with their piebald horses and their whey-headed children, their tubed hunters and their pewter florins.

Once again Myles Mongan sold a horse and once again he and his wife went to drink at Gallagher's public house where the drink has "a lift to it." Once again he and his wife reeled into the street at closing time, arguing about a matter of little importance, and once again he raised his hand to administer a disciplinary blow.

As he did so, however, a memory of Dublin, of the great lawyers, of the small black silk square on the judge's wig, cut through the thickening drink cloud, and he turned slow, dazed eyes on his wife.

Her face was young and fresh under her tow-coloured hair, and her figure was sweet and new. Might not a man be fond of his wife, and yet strike her, without the Attorney-General interfering? He reached into his pocket and taking a half-full whiskey bottle from it pushed it towards her. "Drink up, Annie girl," he said, "drink up, and don't let me be hitting you. Those lawyer fellows take a queer view of a blow."

Side by side in the moonlight they drank from the bottle until it was empty, and then went singing back to the new caravan.

KILKENNY

FINE FIRM TWEEDS

FOR YOUR BOY'S SUIT

KATE O'BRIEN

ANDANTINO

Rome :—June.

Only trivialities can I record. I have too much to learn and carry round. Rome engulfs, defeats, overwhelms. To be bright, to make passing witticisms or chancy comments in the face of the immeasurable is not possible. I cannot even attempt reflection yet, at its crudest. I walk, and talk, and stare about, and read good books and bad. But I know that this immortal, insolent city cannot suffer jottings. Nor can I even imagine how to jot. (Is there a verb "to jot?")

Last evening as I waited for a bus in the Corso Vittorio Emanuele a young priest passed me, and I said to my companion : ' Funny thing, that is the fourth time today that I have seen that young priest.' He smiled : he has lived six years in Rome, and knows many people. ' I know him,' he said, ' this is his beat. Funny you should notice him.' ' I notice him,' I said, ' because the first time I saw him was early this morning when without ruth or grace he snatched a seat from me in a crowded bus.' My companion smiled. ' He is an important member of the Vatican Secretariat,' he said. ' He'll be a Cardinal some day.' ' When I am dead,' I said, ' so he might have let me have that seat.'

But the Romans rarely consider ' letting ' one have anything. The citizens here are marked forever—distinctively from all other Italians—by what once made them great, cold, reasonable ruthlessness. And that attribute is apparent still in this violent city. Its life roars too loudly indeed ; many of its people live in conditions which disgrace the State ; the *borgate*, ' shanty-towns,' are appalling ; the new workers' flats are ghastly pieces of jobbery ; the Civil Service outflows in badly-paid idleness ; and waiting one's turn in the markets and the shops (I have been housekeeping in Rome now for some months) one learns how pitifully, how exaggeratedly carefully one's Roman neighbours manage. Little crusts of cheese are weighed out and bought, of a kind and size that one would not put down at home to catch a mouse ; a sliver of fat bacon will be weighed and neatly wrapped ; one tomato ; half a pound of the soggiest kind of household bread. The Roman people are very poor—indeed one marvels, realising that, at how the young men and women buy (I suppose on long-term

purchase ?) the thousands of diabolical *Vespe*, which make life for them, clearly—but which so painfully insult it for the rest of us.

However, the Roman mania for everything on wheels or dependant on the combustion engine is a fact against which only a fool would argue. Allied to that is their mania for football ; also they are going mad, difficultly, about Television, and they like noise, simply because it is noise, I think. One goes up into any village of the Alban hills any evening. The air is exquisite ; far off one sees the shining sea, and nearer, nearer than the gentle grouping cloud of Rome, lie all the vine-wrapped undulations, blue and fragrant, shadowed by ancient olive-trees and singing ilexes. The lungs are filled, delighted, all senses answer to the sweet gifts of the fields, and to the sunken, shabby grace of the villages. But silence ? Ah God, could there but be silence in these lovely places ! Over Lake Nemi—Nemi, whence came lately all the exquisite wood strawberries we all devoured—Nemi, cold, dark green, wide water, or above Albano, the lake which reflects the Pope's summer villa—one might hope for silence. But the Romans are pursuers of the beauties that lie about them ; they are out-door people. So in the evening all Rome will be with you in any Alban village that you chase to ; and all engines will be at the roar, and all the children will be screaming ; and no matter how simple and romantically flung the *trattoria* you choose, no matter how gentle—and gentle they are—your waiters, some other party will require to have Radio Roma on at full blast. So you will sip your beautiful, dry Frascati and eat your trout brought as you waited from the lake ; you will watch the lights of Rome come pricking up in the valley, and above you the high lights of Rocca di Papa ; you will see still the mirror-flat, sinister lake below you, and you will toast your companions and observe and savour and enjoy. But you will be maddened nevertheless by noise—the noise in which the Romans live.

I write this, yet at this hour, three a.m., the great city lies as quiet as a homely cat about me. I am lucky in Rome, and in this large, old palazzo have a lovely, bare and cool apartment. Indeed, I feel superstitious about my luck in this lodging, for in this house was born in 1876 Eugenio Pacelli, Pius XII. I hope that he was born on this third floor, in this apartment. But anyhow I feel proud and lucky to be in the house where he ran in and out as a little boy ; and whenever our eccentric lift doesn't work—and it certainly wasn't there in the 1870's and 80's—I say to myself, as I climb the worn, stone staircase : 'Pius XII ran up and down here like a feather once.' Certainly, even if it is accidental, it is a vast honour to live in the palazzo which proudly in the courtyard proclaims in cut marble its happy distinction.

Over to me at this desk, in through the great drawing-room windows, blow, morning, evening and night, sweet winds from Ostia and the sea. They come to me across the Janiculum—from here I can see the *Faro*, and, *almost*, the peak of Garibaldi's marble cap. Certainly I can see the pediment of the Fontana Paola, though not quite into the windows of the Villa Spada, where lives our Irish Ambassador to the Holy See. Still, I flatter myself that on an especially sweet-scented evening I benefit here of the jasmine, and the roses that flourish up there, a stone's throw away, for His Excellency Joseph Walsh.

The nearer you live to the Tiber, in Rome, the better the air you breathe. This is odd, because it is impossible to be impressed by the Tiber—that is, if you are native of a country of clean, fast rivers and crystalline lakes, as I am. The Tiber is an ugly streak of yellow-brown water, never clear, always indeed as dense as pea-soup. Yet it flows vigorously, to my surprise—and there is no sweeter pleasure in the Roman evenings than to walk beside it, past its many bridges, down from ancient Ripetta along by the Acquasparta to the Aventino—under the plane-trees, observant of the shadows, and aware of the piled-up history, conflicting, emphatic, re-inforcing, on both sides, as you stroll in relative peace.

Peace can always be no more than relative in Rome. One learns to be grateful then for the hours of one and two and three a.m., when for the most part the *Vespe* have reached home and been switched off. Those little roaring demon bikes attack one's spirit (and one's poor body) all day. They are atrocious. Yet they are an unanswerable expression of Rome, and of youth. One feels old and even a bit silly protesting one's loathing for them. Such vigour as their riders assert is indeed Roman and the boys and girls astride them are demonstrating a Roman thing which all Roman history expresses. And we who are old enough to be unnerved by their pace in the streets, or by the noise they make, have only to make ourselves understand that this—with its non-stop noise—is not our day. Presumably we have had, and enjoyed, our own young time which was a *taedium* to our elders. Now young Rome seems to an old one like me too much. But old Rome, Rome itself, let us say, remains. And in and about and through it I weave, let the motor-cyclists chug and roar as they choose.

July :

About three weeks ago the Roman summer leapt upon us like a heat-maddened tiger. Very frightening her scorching breath, her merciless, powerful, airless heat. An antagonist indeed, and one could only lie still and hope to escape her final blow, and

somehow, when an air stirred again, crawl home. But the air stirred, and instead of crawling home one moved in joy to this airy and vast old apartment. Thereafter, encouraged, the cautious examination of Rome began again and goes forward, 95 in the shade or not. I am hardened to it now. Besides, I have discovered how easy it is to get out by bus to the shores of Albano or Nemi. Also, one can rest and learn and contemplate in any of the Basilicas—and, with exquisite pleasure, from the high, leafy garden of the Palatine. There indeed, sweetly grounded above the great house of Augustus, and with a map spread upon the cool, stone parapet, one can look down and get the major edifices of the Forum clearly identified, with a minimum of error and only a modest expenditure of energy—in conditions which in the early summer evening are truly exquisite. All round the smell of sweet bay, of myrtle, of carnation; overhead the blessed shadow of ilex and acacia; the past in grave salute from every piece of stone—and below us history laid out in quiet, touching peace. The Via Sacra, the fountain where Castor and Pollux watered their horses after the battle of Lake Regillus, the resurrected Vestal Virgins, the Arch of Titus, Constantine's Basilica; left and northward Saturn's lovely fragment; Vespasian's too, and the Arch of Septimius Severus. Further East Cæsar's Forum; quite near, near the Vestal Virgins, the great portico of Antoninus and Faustina. But crowded it was in its day, that Forum, that clustering of Fori; badly planned, I dare to say to all those dead, efficient Romans. Wise were the great and rich who could buy building sites up here on the Palatine. And I wish I could find here Cicero's house, which he cherished so much. Wiser still I think would have been the man who, in the Forum's busy days, chose to live on the Aventine Hill (risking the chance of being called a Pleb), or if not there, on the Quirinale. The Janiculum, best place of all for a Roman villa, was perhaps too far out of town for those distinguished Forum gossips. Anyhow, looking down from the Palatine and over to the Capitol, one is amused to notice that, granted the crowding for place and the importance of place in the close area of the Via Sacra, the Vestal Virgins did very well indeed. Assuredly they got themselves established in a valuable site.

One could linger all night on the fragrant Palatine. But they ring a bell to clear and lock the Forum, and although I am confident one could scramble out somehow on the other side, towards the Tiber and the Aventine, in Rome it seems necessary still—all the Caesars gone—to obey the bells, etc., in fact, to do as Rome does. And Rome, for all its wild noisiness, is a curiously conventional city. Its temperament is coldly impatient—you either do what it does, or take a lot of nonsensical conse-

quences.

Yesterday I went to Santa Maria della Vittoria, to see Bernini's famed Teresa of Avila. It was a pilgrimage of devotion, yet I went anxiously. In Rome I have become fond of Bernini—who would not, among his generously flung, lovely fountains? But I have always demurred from his ecstatic Teresa, in reproduction. It seemed theatrical to me, over-sympathetic, to the point where emotional sympathy misleads itself. However, the sculpture arrested and impressed me. Allowed the baroque and temperamental approach, allowed the exclusive conception of the *illuminata* (I know that word is heretical, but I use it because I am not sure that Bernini's Teresa is a mystic in Teresa's pure and purely stated terms)—I found the work much more touching, much more tender and expressive of sheer holiness than I had expected it to be. I grant, regretfully, the theatrical background, the sunrays, the too slick cunning of the composition; but the living, tender, vulnerable, willing quality in every feature and muscle of the saint, and the alert sweetness of the angel; withal, the surprising, modest life-sizeness of the pair won me. One cannot expect anyone resistant of the mysticism of the great Spaniards to accept this daring sculpture; but I was touched by the passion and penetrative truth which the gay Bernini brought to it—also by the humanness, the tenderness of treatment. Bernini's work is all over Rome, his eternal glory—and mostly—except for the immeasurable nobility of his colonnades in the Piazza of St. Peter's, what he has given Rome is pure 17th century gaiety. But before Teresa of Avila he paused; he was moved and puzzled, did his best to express what she, great purist, could not express. And if he has failed, as she failed, in capture of the ineffable, it is clear that he failed generously, gracefully, and that his sculptured saint in her exaggerated beauty, alike with her alert and exquisite angel, says in all her lines that, as she knew, the vision of God cannot be retold. For all its set flamboyance, this group of two figures does say this. And so I think Teresa, though regarding the whole set-up as unnecessary, would have forgiven the great and gay Bernini.

(To be continued)

FRANCIS RUSSELL

JOHN BOYLE O'REILLY: A FORGOTTEN POET

DURING THE LATTER PART OF THE NINETEENTH CENTURY JOHN BOYLE O'Reilly was perhaps the most celebrated Irish exile of all those who settled in America. As a poet, novelist, editor, wit and defender of his countrymen, he did much to mitigate the antagonisms between Puritan and Catholic America that had been so intensified by the Irish migrations of the famine years. He was a man gifted with a singularly winning personality who, arriving penniless in America as an escaped convict, soon made a national literary reputation for himself. The established New England circle of Longfellow, Lowell, Whittier and Holmes regarded him highly. His quick success together with his natural optimism blinded him to some extent to the deeper racial and economic conflicts underlying the new republic. Men of a sadder vision like O'Donovan Rossa saw things more clearly. But whatever O'Reilly's insufficiencies he became in his lifetime one of the most respected of Irish-Americans and one of the better-known poets of New England and of the United States.

He still exists as a name, but he is no longer read. His two novels, his little volume on *Athletics and Manly Sport*, and his four books of verse are forgotten. Sometimes an ageing Boston politician will quote a few swinging lines from *The Exile of the Gael* on St. Patrick's Day, and on the anniversary of O'Reilly's birth the Charitable Irish Society of Boston still places a wreath on his statue in the Fenway. To the present generation however he has become a figure on a monument. Most of the older anthologies include the eight lines of *A White Rose*, the little mannered lyric which has alone survived from his four volumes. It is in the *Oxford Book of English Verse*, but the more recent *Oxford Book of American Verse* excludes it, as does Louis Untermeyer in his various collections. Such versifying, so far removed from the idiom of our own time, no longer arouses emotional response. O'Reilly's roses seem made of wax:

The red rose whispers of passion,
And the white rose breathes of love ;
Oh, the red rose is a falcon,
And the white rose is a dove.

But I send you a cream-white rosebud
With a flush on its petal tips ;
For the love that is purest and sweetest
Has a kiss of desire on the lips.

As a poet he is bounded by his era, the era of Mrs. Hemans and Jean Ingelow, both of whom he resembles on a somewhat lower level. As a man and a leader however, and in particular as an example of the phenomenon of the Celt in America, he deserves to be remembered. If his talents had only equalled his character he would have been a great poet.

O'Reilly was born at Dowth Castle near Drogheda in 1844, close to the Boyne and four miles west of Tara. The castle then housed the Netterville Institution and contained a National School of which his father was headmaster. At the age of eleven O'Reilly left school and became a printer's devil for the *Drogheda Argus* where he worked the conventionally long hours of the early Victorian period—from six to nine in the morning, from ten to two, and from three to seven or eight in the evening. However the work was not hard, and the boy had none of the young Dickens's sense of grievance at his early employment.

Four years later, at the death of the *Argus* proprietor, O'Reilly crossed over to England to live with his relatives at Preston. There he found a job in the office of the *Guardian* where he stayed on until he eventually became a reporter. The three and a half years he spent at Preston were among the happiest of his life. They are reflected in the serene description of an English small town with which his first novel, *Moondyne*, open, reflected too in the fact that despite the imprisonments and hardships he later endured at the hands of the English government he bore no enmity to England or its people. All the characters of *Moondyne*, including its autobiographical hero, are English rather than Irish.

A year after his arrival in Preston, O'Reilly joined the 11th Lancashire Rifle Volunteers. This brief taste of spare-time military life pleased him, and by the time he was seventeen he had become a non-commissioned officer. Yet at the same time, influenced by the numerous emigrant Irish from the neighbourhood of Liverpool, he was becoming interested in Fenianism.

When he reached the age of nineteen he made his choice. He left Preston to return to Ireland as a trooper in the Tenth Hussars. At that time a third of the ranks of the British Army was Irish. According to O'Reilly's biographer, James Jeffrey Roche, he entered the British military service with the object of overthrowing the monarchy. This led Lecky, after the book appeared, to accuse O'Reilly of violating his soldier's oath and betraying his trust.

Neither version fits the facts. O'Reilly was still an unformed young man when he joined the army. His state of mind was not that of a conspirator, but ambivalent. On the one hand he liked the life of a trooper. He was proud of his dark blue hussar's uniform with its plumed busby. A smart and able soldier, he enjoyed the martial aspects of life in the Prince of

Wales' Own. On the other hand, in his barrack existence, he drew closer to the dissident nationalism that now expressed itself through the Fenian movement among the rank and file of the English army.

O'Reilly's was the case of a man with divided loyalties, loyalties that were incompatible and yet—such is the illogicality of the human mind—managed to exist side by side. Although he was proudly conscious of his Irish nationality, he had nevertheless lived happily in England. He loved Ireland and he loved the life of a hussar. There was probably no ulterior thought in his mind when he enlisted. While a hussar he did take the Fenian oath with a number of his barrack-mates. But when the group of which he was a member was betrayed by an informer and he himself was arrested at the Island Bridge barracks in February, 1866, the charges against him were not of conspiring but of “having come to the knowledge of an intended mutiny in Her Majesty's Forces in Ireland and not giving information of said intended mutiny to his commanding officer.” This mutiny was mostly hair-brained talk. The real case against O'Reilly was that, having knowledge of it, he would not betray his comrades. His Fenianism was a feeling of emotional solidarity with his fellow countrymen, not a manifesto. Years later he was to write: “I never realized the Fenian movement until I found myself in prison for it.”

A formal sentence of death was passed on him which was commuted the same day to life imprisonment and later to twenty years. While waiting shipment to England he was placed in Mountjoy Prison. Some time before this he had begun to versify, and he now composed two poems, *The Irish Flag* and *The Irish Soldiers*, which he scratched on the wall of his cell, adding the defiant note “written on the wall of my cell with a nail, July 17, 1866. Once an English soldier; now an Irish felon; and proud of the exchange.” In spite of the defiance the verses were feeble.

After a few weeks he and his companions were marched through the streets of Dublin in chains and shipped to England. First he was sent to Millbank where Mitchell and Davitt were imprisoned and which he describes at some length in *Moondyne*. Then later he was moved to Chatham where after an attempted escape he was put into one of the gangs wheeling bricks at Portsmouth. Dartmoor, the man-killer of its day, was his last English prison where he again tried to escape. Four months later the order came for his transportation to Australia. He was then sent by way of Portland to the convict ship *Hougoumont* with a number of other Irish political prisoners. In *Moondyne* O'Reilly describe the *Hougoumont* in the rhetoric of the period: “Only those who have stood within the bars, and heard the din of devils and the appalling sounds of despair, blended in a diapason that

made every hatch-mouth a vent of hell, can imagine the horrors of the hold of a convict ship." During the long voyage the prisoners, with the aid of the prison chaplain, were able to publish a weekly paper, *The Wild Goose*, which O'Reilly helped edit.

The voyage ended in the Roadstead of Freemantle, the little Australian town enmeshed in surrounding woodlands with the great stone prison high above it. From Freemantle O'Reilly was sent thirty miles along the coast to the convict settlement of Bunbury where he was assigned to a road party of common criminals. Australia seemed a strange and semi-tropical land, and even in his captivity he marvelled at it, at the great stretching landscape, and the flowers and brightly-coloured birds under the enormous southern skies. The convicts were not bound. On all sides of them the Bush extended endless miles, a barrier more formidable than chains. Even if a man could escape the camp and the native trackers, he could not live. Yet before O'Reilly had been there many weeks he began to plot another escape. He was determined somehow to make his way through the wild Bush country to the sea. "It is an excellent way to commit suicide," the missionary priest, Father McCabe, told him when he learned of his plans. There must have been unusual qualities in O'Reilly that made the Bush priest single him out from the mass of criminals. "Don't think of it again," he told the young man. "Let me think out a plan for you."

O'Reilly's subsequent flight from Australia was one of the great escapes of the nineteenth century, an amazing adventure even to those who have become accustomed to the intricate dangers of later escapes. Father McCabe's plan was for O'Reilly to be smuggled from the convict camp and across the Bush to the seacoast where he could be secreted aboard an American whaler scheduled to touch at Bunbury for water. When the time came and an intermediary brought the priest's alert, O'Reilly broke away from camp to a Bush rendezvous. He was then taken on horseback by stages to a remote beach on the west coast. From the beach he was to have been rowed out to the whaler as it passed on its return. The first attempt failed. Although the whaler was sighted they did not succeed in reaching it with their skiff. The following day O'Reilly rowed out alone, still unsuccessfully searching, but after much hardship he was forced back to the beach where he endured several days of thirst and privation. Then for some weeks he was secreted in the remote home of a friendly settler until another American boat should arrive. Finally Father McCabe managed to make arrangements with the captain of the bark *Gazelle* from New Bedford. This time the attempt succeeded and O'Reilly in his small boat reached the *Gazelle* just out of sight of land.

It was almost impossible to escape from Australia in those days, and O'Reilly's flight gave him a prominence he had never

had before. Two months later the *Gazelle* put into the harbour of Roderique, a small British island in the Indian Ocean. There the forewarned governor appeared with a police guard to demand the surrender of the felon O'Reilly. The *Gazelle's* officers maintained that he had committed suicide—and although the governor was not really taken in by this implausibility, he had the humanity to accept it. O'Reilly then adopted the name and papers of a seaman who had deserted. When they reached the Cape of Good Hope he was transferred to another American bark, the *Sapphire* of Boston. As a Mr. Soule he arrived safely at Liverpool where he stepped on English soil again only long enough to secure passage to America. Unhindered and unsuspected he took his place on the regular passenger list outward bound for Philadelphia. The second day out, in clearing weather, they sailed close enough to shore so that O'Reilly could see the familiar outline of the Irish coast. It was the last glimpse he was ever to have of Ireland. Years after he wrote of this moment: "Home, friends, all that I loved in the world were there, almost beside me,—there 'under the sun,' and I, for loving them, a hunted, outlawed fugitive, an escaped convict, was sailing away from all I treasured,—perhaps, forever."

On his arrival in Philadelphia O'Reilly was met at the boat by a Fenian delegate who asked for Boyle O'Reilly the poet, and was surprised and at first somewhat dubious at the unpoetical appearance of the young man facing him. O'Reilly did not stay long in Philadelphia, but soon moved on to Boston, where he was to live out the rest of his life. He was received into that city by Dr. Robert Dwyer Joyce whose long-forgotten *Deirdre* and *Ballads of Irish Chivalry* were then considered signs of a Celtic re-birth in the United States. Joyce, together with Patrick Collins, an outstanding Irish-American who was to be Consul-General in London and later Mayor of Boston, took the young man in charge and found him a job as reporter and general writer with the *Boston Pilot*. The *Pilot*, a weekly newspaper, was the most influential Irish-Catholic journal in the United States, the spokesman for the waves of immigrants who had been pouring into the country since the famine years.

In no great time O'Reilly became the *Pilot's* editor and one of its owners, a position he held until his death at the age of forty-five through an accidental overdose of sleeping powder. His last dozen years in America were serene and successful. He married, and his home life was happy. His reputation became for a time international. In 1882 he was chosen to read his poem *America* at the reunion of the Army of the Potomac with General Grant presiding. Grant later asserted that it was the grandest poem he had ever heard—which may well have been true. Dr. Joyce claimed that O'Reilly's fame was co-extensive with the English language. "Few men have felt so powerfully the

divinus afflatus of Poesy," Cardinal Gibbons wrote of him. "The bitterest prejudices of race and creed seem to have been utterly conquered by the masterful goodness of his heart and the winning sweetness of his tongue."

O'Reilly was the first Irishman of the mass immigration period to bridge the gap between the immigrants and the Yankee descendants of the Puritans. The young man's magnetic quality that had so impressed Father McCabe in Australia attracted all the elements of the Boston community to him. At the centenaries of O'Connell and of Emmet he was the commemorative speaker. He delivered the principal American address on Moore's birthday. When Parnell visited New York in 1880 it was O'Reilly who formally welcomed him, as later he was to welcome Justin McCarthy and other Nationalist members of the English parliament. During O'Reilly's editorship the *Pilot* published poems by Yeats and Hyde, still young and unknown, as well as pieces by the emergent Oscar Wilde. Wilde wrote to O'Reilly: "I esteem it a great honour that the first American paper I appeared in should be your admirable *Pilot*."

In his later American years O'Reilly was accurately described as "a quiet unobtrusive gentleman of conservative vein and a devoted Christian." Although during this time he helped organize the expedition of the whaler *Catalpa* which rescued six other prisoners from Australia, it was the last echo of his Fenian past. Fenianism which ended tragically in Ireland, ended farcically in the United States with the comic opera invasion of Canada by the American Fenian Army in 1870. O'Reilly, who had gone along with this over-generated expedition as a reporter, wrote a lengthy and critical account of the whole absurd mismanaged affair. He himself became a gradualist and a leading American supporter of Home Rule. He was not a physical force man. His nature was much more that of a reconciler than a revolutionary. Each St. Patrick's Day he had the *Pilot* building twined with strands of green and orange. In the New York disorders that accompanied the annual Orangemen's parade he condemned both sides.

O'Reilly was the most prominent of a group of poets of Irish birth and American adoption who saw themselves as the inheritors and bearers of the Celtic tradition, who felt themselves each one as did the young Yeats,

True brother of a company
That sang to sweeten Ireland's wrong,
Ballad and story, rann and song . . .

Even the names of the others are forgotten, those "recent Celtic minstrels of his greater Ireland" — Miles O'Reilly, Maurice Egan "the sweet true poet," Father Ryan, John Augustus Shea, Patrick Sarsfield Cassidy and the rest. Their Irish

patriotism was sincere if derivative, but when it was applied to verse it found expression in bombast and a series of rhymed clichés such as filled the pages of O'Reilly's *Irish Anthology*.

. . . Till the castle be wrecked and the last red coat of its
myrmidon hordes be gone,
The Irish race, through time and space, shall
ever go marching on.

Almost any page will furnish similar examples. O'Reilly himself could write in *The Exile of the Gael*:

No treason we bring from Erin—nor bring we
shame nor guilt!
The sword we hold may be broken, but we have not
dropped the hilt!
The wreath we bear to Columbia is twisted
of thorns, not bays;
And the songs we sing are saddened by thoughts of
desolate days.
But the hearts we bring for Freedom are washed
in the surge of tears;
And we claim our right by a People's fight
outliving a thousand years!

His American set pieces have a similar tone-deafness. Much of the bulk of his verse is made up of long and improbable narrative poems, most of them with an Irish background, but some dealing with America and Australia. All his books are interspersed with weak little lyrics. O'Reilly wrote easily, naively, and to the readers of his time effectively. The fault was in his stars, not in himself, that he was not a poet.

O'Reilly's two novels were incidental accomplishments. The first, *Moondyne, A Story of Convict Life in Australia*, appeared serially in the *Pilot*. It is in a sense a dream autobiography, interspersed with many of O'Reilly's actual experiences. The plot is a conventional Victorian one with any manner of coincidences, apostrophes to female virtue, bold heroes, dark villains and so on. Yet, after one accepts the tradition, the story moves on and holds one's interest. There are authentic glimpses of Western Australia as it was when it was a penal colony, living descriptions of the Bush landscape and of the four-month voyage in the convict ship. The story concerns an escaped convict, Moondyne Joe, who bears O'Reilly's old number, 406. This convict managed to make his way into the mountains of the Vasse where he was given the name Moondyne by the natives "which had some meaning more than either manhood or kingship." After a lengthy period during which he discovers gold in the Vasse, Moondyne Joe re-appears as the wealthy and mysterious Mr. Wyville, a kind of Australian Count of Monte Cristo whose holdings—the deeds of which have been received through the Colonial Office—are so vast that they include a rect-

angle with the northern and southern limits the 33rd and 34th parallels of latitude and the eastern and western boundaries the 115th and 116th longitude. The setting of *Moondyne* alternates between London and Australia. Indirectly it reflects the political atmosphere of the days of the elder Chamberlain. All the London characters of the novel, although highly connected, are republicans. Lord Somers the Colonial Secretary deplors the monarchy as does his friend Mr. Hamerton who has renounced his hereditary title. No Irish characters appear in *Moondyne's* pages. The secondary hero, Will Sheridan, who becomes a company agent in Australia and who is another facet of O'Reilly, is a Catholic, but this is treated as quite an incidental matter. What is most surprising about the book is the complete absence of bitterness on the part of the author towards England and the English.

The King's Men, written by O'Reilly with the collaboration of several others, is a novel projected into the future, a genre made familiar by Bellamy and continued in our own day by George Orwell. The action of *The King's Men* opens in the year 1940. At this point in the history of the British Isles, Home Rule has been operating for some time in reverse, for the Republic of Great Britain and Ireland is now in its seventeenth year under the Presidency of O'Donovan Rourke. The deposed George V is now in exile in Boston Massachusetts, holding an emigré court in a shabby hotel in the South End where he is attended by the Dukes of Norfolk and Wellington, Lord Gladstone Churchill and the Archbishop of Canterbury. Although the novel has the involved Victorian love plot, it has in addition a secondary plot concerned with a Royalist attempt to restore the lost monarchy. A small and ineffectual group of aristocratic reactionaries take the desperate step of raising the royal standard at Aldershot, hoping to rally the army to them. Their gesture fails miserably. When the news of their action reaches London the outraged citizens blow up the Albert Memorial in their indignation. George V fails ignominiously to back his supporters, and without even the satisfaction of his loyalty they are seized and sent to Dartmoor.

The King's Men is chiefly a vehicle for O'Reilly's republican sentiments. It has no real literary value, although there are amusing touches such as the exiled George V having difficulties with his hotel bill, the appearance of Lord Gladstone Churchill, and the Albert Memorial going up in smoke. The account of prison life in Dartmoor is realistic enough, drawn as it was from O'Reilly's own experience. Why he should have needed collaborators in this book is difficult to see. Whatever their contribution however, the general pattern of the writing and the imprint of thought were his. It was his last attempt at fiction.

O'Reilly as a man represented the best of Ireland in America. That is his lasting significance. He and others like Patrick

Collins, and Dr. Joyce, and Hugh O'Brien the first Irish Mayor of Boston, were men of culture and integrity who, like the Germans of 1848, had come to the United States as political exiles. With their abilities and their firmness of character they assumed the leadership of their fellow countrymen. Those semi-literate masses who had swarmed across the ocean were however driven by economic necessity and not by political idealism. They had been forced to leave a broken land to become the lowest level of the new-world proletariat. The Irish immigrants in the eastern set-board cities lived and died like animals. In the alleys of East Boston during the depressed second year of the Civil War they starved. Their sombre fate played itself out obscurely, below the levels of literary understanding.

Against the fact of mass migration such high-minded men as O'Reilly were powerless. Individualistic by outlook, they could not grasp the sociological and economic significance of this mass phenomenon. They themselves were incorruptible. But they failed to comprehend that the wretched immigrants in their slums would not be bound by the restrictions of English common law as applied by the intrenched descendants of the Puritans.

Idealists like O'Reilly expected the newcomers to accept the ethic of the community to which they had come, even though it excluded them from every level but the lowest. They did not see that the only way up for the immigrants lay in the rejection of this ethic and an assertion of political power. The Irish urban masses wanted jobs and some kind of protection against the dark days for which the laissez-faire attitude of the community offered no assistance. Those needs the rising political bosses supplied through a deft manipulation of the Irish vote.

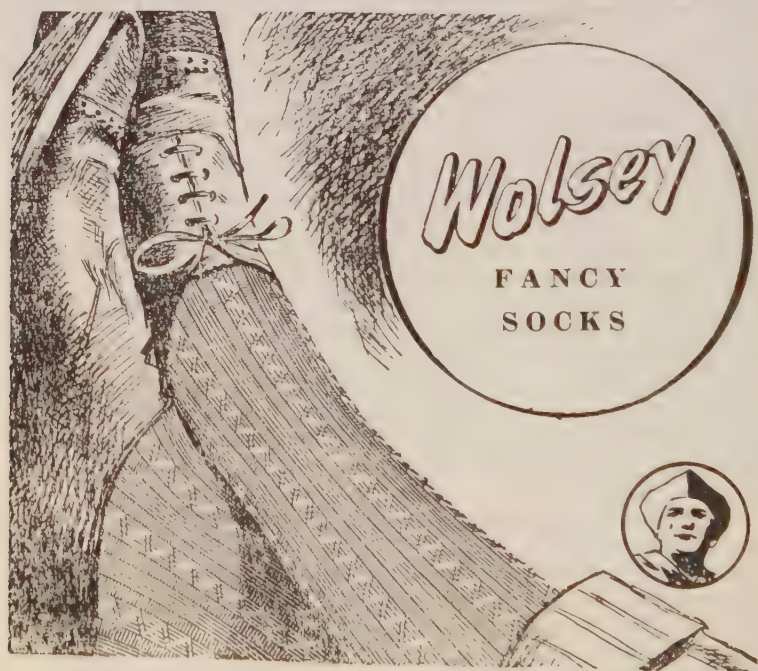
So it was that the men of the great Irish tradition, men like O'Brien and Collins and of whom O'Reilly was the honoured leader, were followed by the little venal men, the "Honey" Fitzgeralds, the Dan Coakleys and their blackmailing rings, the "Bath-house John" McCoys, the Dowds and the O'Dwyers. Ex-Mayor and Governor Jim Curley, one of the last of the old-time bosses, who likes to quote O'Reilly still, admits disarmingly in his approved biography that there wasn't a Boston City Hall contract that didn't have something in it for him during his four terms as mayor. The tradition of Emmet ended in the tradition of Tammany Hall.

O'Reilly is buried in Holyrood Cemetery in Brookline, six miles from Boston. A seventy-ton mass of conglomerate, the local Roxbury pudding-stone, marks his grave at the cemetery's highest point, overlooking Chestnut Hill. Near him is his friend Patrick Collins, and just below his friend and biographer the poet James Jeffrey Roche.

Down the hillside the graves of the more prosperous Irish of the last fifty years line the winding paths, their relative financial

status indicated by the number of cubic feet of polished granite placed over them. Beyond the paths is a wall, and beyond that the humming traffic of the Worcester Turnpike.

John Boyle O'Reilly lies on this eminence facing a twentieth-century America unaware of him. His vision was not a sustaining one. The pattern of the Celt in the new world took other shapes. High above the Turnpike the great mass of conglomerate appears lonely and remote, and few passers-by know what it commemorates, the failure of a noble spirit who lies there in a foreign land.



Poetry Ireland 26

EDITED BY DAVID MARCUS

BRIAN O'DOHERTY *Poems From A Hospital*

NOEL KEAVENEY *Two Poems*

JAMES O'ROURKE *Spring Mornings*

BRIAN O'DOHERTY

Poems From A Hospital

1.

These poems are sad
So read them if you will.
I do not care.
It is quite natural—
A hospital is where
The flesh goes on
Or stops.
Here the stool has these two legs ;
It lacks a third to, make it safe,
So sit and fall—fall front
Or back ;
Not in this verse you'll take
Your conscience off the rack
Of living.

2.

Under the hemisphere of light, a mind
Submerged, stepped down in planes ;
A body, belly bared
In sterile sheets, anonymous
By its possession of insides
Like everyone else's.
The ceremony begins ; dispassionate
Figures close around proceeding
Irreversibly
Beyond the edge of pain—
The silver thread of tension now pulled taut,
Now slacks again, till silently once more
It tightens, and shadows gather
In that bright shadowless place ;

Cut clip tie unclip resect
 Swab catch tie uncatch cut,
 It goes on in strange rhythms
 With a bare functional beauty ; eventually
 It ends—
 Then wheeled away (with mind attached)
 On rubber wheels by emotionless porters.
 Later, the mind surfaces, puts on
 Its body like a glove, and becomes
 Mister Murphy, a creature
 Sensitive to pain.

3.

Not there, not there, over here—put him
 Over here ; poor devil, dripping, he smells
 Wet. Listen for the heart silence.
 To satisfy find a vein, an injection—
 Pull up these rags, there's one, thick
 With dead blood.

And yesterday
 (Time is cruel) this was, now a paragraph
 In the evening paper, a place on the canal
 Where the children don't swim anymore.
 He's dead.

Breast-bone like the keel
 Of an upturned boat, a frame of ribs
 For yellow skin stretched taut, hair
 Licked like a new-dropped calf, opaque
 Eyes—people do not look their best—
 Yes, dead.
 Where was he, who was he, why did he,
 It doesn't matter. But
 His residue is an embarrassment,
 A problem, in life social, in death
 Disposal.

Inform the police (officially)
 They'll inform the coroner
 The coroner tells you,
 The official compass describing its perfect circle
 With this in the centre—
 More important than ever in life,
 For did he not cause
 Two policemen to walk a half-mile
 To a telephone, a house-surgeon
 To be late for dinner, and a coroner
 To be disturbed while reading Proust
 In the original.

Tell the porters
 They can shift him now.

4.

Jack and John and prickman Pete
 And Joan (the bitch) and Eddie
 With the dropped lid
 And twenty others
 We stamped, a bisexed mass,
 Down the ward between
 The beds
 And gathered round.
 White-coated portly Crapman
 Full
 Of honours and bad air
 Raised his fat hand
 And stopped it by his ear
 Saying 'Look'.
 We looked—not at the hand,
 The bed of course—
 And all I saw
 Was wasted flesh and weary eyes
 And a bare arm flaccid on the bed
 Like a dead plucked turkey's neck.
 'You sir, observe and say one word
 And then we'll talk about it—'
 Pete picked his nose
 And did not find the word
 Nor Jack nor John nor Joan (the bitch)
 Nor cutese Joe eyes gleaming
 Pure intelligence—
 Nor I—you can't say death.
 So then he said the word
 And talked it for an hour
 Joan (the bitch) with Steeven's fellow
 Weaved
 Hot glances across the bed,
 Bill put his lips
 By Murphy's ear
 And whispered for a while—
 And then he paused, and just said
 'Tit'.
 Pure Peg, she heard,
 And, chastely smiled,
 Jack caught my eye,
 His own bisected with a wink
 And so we spent an hour of our youth
 Around a bed in Spring.

5

I wish to hear birds sing again
 And see them swift in drowsy air,
 Hear laughter of young girls, red lips—

Not see them dead
 Their trinkets full of fear.
 I've seen too much of death
 And I have died too often
 To be free ;
 What then is left for me?
 Shall I then take a friend, carouse
 And storm the level seas within my skull,
 Shall I then shake the pillars of my youth,
 Pant out my young lusts on sweet breasts ?
 Or shall I sit and tell
 Sad stories of the death of Kulligan's
 Twenty brothers—
 Or how the pox befell
 His twenty mothers?

NOEL KEAVENEY

The Cemetery

I

Blind eyes
 drag up the sun.
 Men groan
 and wake from life
 to live the day
 that stumbles, shoes untied,
 along the streets
 and blushing
 hides its face among the tombs.

II

Stretch,
 throw wide your praying limbs,
 yawn homage
 to your shy assassin.

III

Then quickly
 curse the day's existence,
 nod your winking head to work.
 The light has lost its youth
 and you
 have yet to meet the damned
 that walk the avenues
 of this grey cemetery.

IV

Dead,
 they walk the sewers,
 well dressed

to meet their friends
and whisper
crack-lipped secrets of their daily bread
to sweating walls.

V

But now
the tombs are dark.
Mourning
windows blind.
The dust settles
quietly
on sleeping carrion
restlessly alive.

Discursivness

Staring vaguely
at the draught-board pavement
their words move
cautiously
from square to classified square,
then sliding
between the legs of definition
escape
along the barren path of naked sound,
the straitjacket of opinion.

JAMES O'ROURKE

Spring Mornings

In Highcliffe
now spring mornings come
soft spidering light
from trees to tree, weaving through boughs
and webbing all
the winged leaves
in this my cobweb fairyland ;
as webs web light and shade to nets
I dream of future fishing days,
and fondle lyric lines
as strands
or men in the Bethsaidian's hands.



WITH



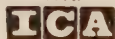
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WITH



It's a revelation

BOOK REVIEWS

THE IDENTITY OF YEATS
by Richard Ellman.
Macmillan. 25/-

THE LETTERS OF W. B.
YEATS Edited by Allan Wade.
Hart-Davis. 63/-

Remy de Gourmont described Balzac as a noble river fed by impure streams, and a number of Yeats's admirers have questioned the value of what, along with his splendid sense of the positive in human personality, was certainly one of the main things which, poetically, set him going, namely, his life-long study of magic lore. But while it is obvious how much this study was an incitement to him, it is perhaps less apparent how little anxiety it need cause to those admirers who are disturbed by what appears to them to be the poet's unfortunate leaning towards mumbo-jumbo. Mr. Ellman's examination of this question is, I think, one of the most valuable things in this valuable book. He points out that Yeats's assertions of the more Delphic kind are greatly qualified, not only by the power of his humanistic feeling and the vigorous, breathing qualities of his style as it developed, but also by a sense of complexity and honesty that are characteristic. In "Sailing to Byzantium", for instance, Yeats uses the phrase "artifice of eternity" with a full sense of the unpleasant connotations of the word "artifice"; "half of the poet's mind reflects the escape from life for which the other half longs." In "All Souls' Night", one of the more "breathless" poems, Mr. Ellman rightly holds that "the work has magic only in its facade . . . In the guise of an invocation ceremony Yeats utters a lament for human incompleteness." With Yeats, as with most great poets, common passion is the ground from which all the ladders start.

This, though a leading theme, is

but one of several in this book, where the critic examines in all its aspects, but always with the same sobriety and enthusiasm, Yeats's charged and intricate poetry, the philosophy that prompted rather than inspired it, its ever-changing manner, its constancy of themes. The work is full of fine perception, as when he says that in the poems "the speaker is himself transcended; one forgets his plight to regard the qualities represented in it. That is why the poems, although in them he constantly speaks about himself, rarely seem self pre-occupied."

The book contains verse and prose by Yeats hitherto unpublished, including a superb "Crazy Jane" poem, with the robust refrain "May the Devil Take King George". Fascinating to study are the several versions of "Leda and the Swan", through which the poem passed before reaching its final form. Revealing, too, if not always just, are Yeats's suggested revisions for Frank O'Connor's translation of poems from the Irish. Perhaps it is inevitable that a work of this kind should give at times a sense of over-discussion. Thus, in the analysis of Yeats's phrasing, much that seems instinctive (in the authentic accent of his letters, for certain) is surely made too much of—or belittled?—as craftsmanship and device.

"It is curious," said Yeats in one of his later letters, "how one's life falls into definite sections—in 1897 a new scene was set—new actors appeared." Mr. Allan Wade, editing this immense volume of the poet's letters, does indeed take this date as a commencement to the third section of the book—there are six sections in all. The volume is well over 900 pages, yet it seems that it must be accepted as being far from complete, as correspondence with Shaw, Joyce, Synge, Ezra Pound and others is still unavailable. Many letters to Maud Gonne MacBride were des-

troyed along with all her papers during the Civil War, some letters to Lionel Johnson have disappeared, and Yeats himself destroyed, apparently at random, a large portion of his correspondence with Mrs. Olivia Shakespear, who remained one of his closest friends from the mid-nineties to her death, which occurred only a few months before his own. Mr. Wade, whose editing is as complete as it is competent, thinks that by this accident the loss may have been incurred of much valuable information on the poet's life from 1904 to 1917, the period represented by the missing letters. One agrees with him in finding these letters "among the most vivid and varied of the whole collection." Olivia Shakespear must have been a very remarkable woman, for Yeats, writing when she was as old as he, has lost none of the sparkle which she, as a correspondent, seems always to have brought out in him. It would be hard to open this book and come upon a letter, however casual, without interest or character. The letters are very varied, some, like those to A.E. or John Quinn of the greatest importance because of the light they throw on Yeats's mental development, others (usually to women friends) having more the appeal of passing perceptions, gossip and drollery. Again and again the flashing phrase leaps out. His humour is ever spry, and when he writes of Ezra Pound from Rapallo: "He has most of Maud Gonne's opinions (political and economic) about the world in general, being what Lewis calls 'the revolutionary simpleton'." The chief difference is that he hates Palgrave's *Golden Treasury* as she does the Free State Government, and thinks even worse of its editor than she does of President Cosgrave. He has her passion for cats and large numbers wait for him every night at a certain street corner knowing that his pocket is full of meat bones or chicken bones. They belong to the oppressed races."

These letters illustrate the astonishing fullness of Yeats's life, or rather, since life is always an outcome of his personality.

T.S.

TO NEXT YEAR IN JERUSALEM by David Marcus. Macmillan. 12/6

Racially, there is no such thing as a Jew. There is no such thing as an Irishman or an Englishman either. Jewishness, Irishness, etc., are a matter of upbringing and institution. As Julian Huxley told an Irish audience, speaking of the peoples of Europe: "We are all slightly varied blends of one highly mongrelised race." He did not satisfy the Gaels present, nor the Fir Bolgs, but he was right.

Irish Jews, though as a rule practising and orthodox, and consequently having the Jewishness of upbringing, are nevertheless far more Irish than Jewish. Most of them would be like fish out of water in Israel, like returned Irish Yanks looking for their "roots" in Ballybackof beyond, or Derry Catholics in Skibbereen. Set down in the streets of Tel-Aviv, they would be hard put to it to understand Nathan Gubsky from Warsaw or Vitebsk, but would hail Patrick Finnegan from Montenegro or Drumcondra as a long lost brother. A Swede, who had spent two years in Palestine, once told me that he was asked at a social gathering in Haifa if he had any feeling of "being different" in such a party. "How do you mean 'different'?" "Well—your being the only non-Jew present." "Oh, *that*! None at all. But *you're* not Jews. The only Jews I've met in my two years out here were visiting American lawyers."

With such thoughts in mind, I could not feel that the "problem" of the Irish Jew, as here stated by Jonathan Lippman, *needed* to be a real one at all—though I recognise that a problem may well be real without *needing* to be so. When, however, as a "solution" to the problem of Jew-falls-in-love-with-Irish-Catholic-girl, we are offered no alternative but for the Irish Jew to break off the affair and go "home" to Palestine, I rebel! I know of course that Jewish bigots are just as bad as Catholic bigots on the question of intermarriage, but bigots are made to be fought!

That the Jew outside of Israel is "a soul perpetually in exile", is

romantic nonsense, and I simply don't believe it; as well see the Irish traffic-cop in New York as a soul perpetually in exile. The one thing that would really frighten *him* would be the prospect of being sent home.

The real problem in this somewhat uneven first novel springs from the indecision and weakness of Jonathan the hero; and at least part of this indecision is in the mind of the author. Jonathan's craving to "belong," to fit in, to pass unnoticed, his essential *orthodoxy*, are all, for that matter, as American as they are Jewish; but in America this craving is tending to become a national neurosis. Jews, by reason not of race but of upbringing, usually have a sturdier self-confidence. Jonathan's problem, indeed, is far from being an exclusively Jewish problem. It is that of the "non-conforming" minority anywhere, suffering all of them from obvious outer pressures, and some of them from secret inner desires to conform to the tenets and taboos of the society around them. And that is why this novel will interest Irish Protestants, Freethinkers and Atheists as much as Irish Jews. Unfortunately, its challenge is unevenly presented. Parts of it have what, in another connection, the author calls "the distant quality of a day-dream." The first chapter, for instance, suffers particularly from this sense of having been intellectually composed, or dreamed up rather than lived. On the other hand, the scenes of Jewish ritual—how like the Roman it is in many ways!—and family discussion, have a warmth and a conviction not always sustained elsewhere.

Yet, many aspects of the main question are skilfully set forth: anti-semitic intolerance; its Jewish counterpart: "Do you seriously think that in the whole Christian world, among the millions of Christians alive, not one could be found whom a Jew could trust as a real friend?" . . . "If it came to the pinch, no, there isn't one . . . a Christian will befriend a Jew only as it suits him to." Such is the extreme view against which Jonathan rebels with all his heart, but not with all his head. He hates this apartheid of the soul, but he sees too that "the Catholic in his own mind, has not

the slightest doubt that he is right, that Heaven is his, that everyone else is lost and inferior" . . . "Show me a good Catholic," he says to his friend Father Lenehan ("an enlightened priest with a strongly liberal mind"), "and I'll show you an anti-semite." This priest is well drawn. No one could say that in provincial Ireland he is *impossible*, "worldly, broad-minded, and coldly sane about everything, even including religion", but his like is to-day to be found in diminishing numbers in Ireland, and above a certain hierarchical level not at all. In Ireland, such priests remain small-town curates all their lives. They are not such stuff as Bishops are made on, and their influence on Church policy is narrowly circumscribed. Yet there is no question but that Father Lenehan is one of the characters who "come alive". Alas! the same cannot be said of the heroine; and, indeed, if she *had*, she might have knocked a fair share of nonsense out of the hero. There is little doubt in my mind but that at the end of Chapter 1 she should have hit him good and hard with that suit-case!

To Irish readers, the parallel between the Israeli struggle for freedom and the earlier Irish one is of great interest, and Mr. Marcus brings out well the way in which this parallel, which is a close one, provides a key to mutual understanding, even if only at certain levels. The attitudes to the native languages do not offer so close a parallel: the Jews have already brilliantly and entirely revived Hebrew as a modern language—under strong pressure of necessity, be it admitted—and have even preserved a second "pet" language, Yiddish, over centuries of successive exile and dispersal, while the Irish tongue is slowly dying in the iron lung of artificial and secretly resented compulsion.

With all its wealth of actuality, and Jewish and Irish interest, *To Next Year in Jerusalem* is not the success one could have hoped. Apart from the failure to bring the heroine alive, and make the hero dither and hesitate a bit less, there are disconcerting blemishes of style, stilted conversations, awkwardnesses of phrase, which seems to be the result either

Sean-focla Connact

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tomás s. ó máille

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of insufficient care, or perhaps of certain chapters being written at widely separate periods of time. And yet, it is noteworthy that none of the scenes portraying the really grand character of Mordecai, Jonathan's grandfather, the patriarch with the glint of humour in his eye, strikes a single false note. Mordecai makes the book. He remains in our minds, vigorous, heroic, cheerful even under the threat of dropping suddenly dead: "If God can be ready for me at a moment's notice, I can be ready for him at a moment's notice." Everything here is right and sure: at the "auction" bidding to help Israel, in the synagogue, at the news of the Jews' hitting back after the Ben Yehuda Street bomb attack. All this is good writing, accomplished with great sureness of touch, and it leaves us with the conviction that Mr. Marcus can and will do better; that in fact this particular novel may have been one he *had* to write, but that once he has liberated himself from the fears and tribulations which are its source, he will go considerably further.

O. Sheehy Skeffington.

IRISH SAGAS AND FOLK- TALES, Retold by Eileen

O'Faolain. O.U.P. 12/6

This is one volume in a new series brought out by the Oxford University Press dealing with the folk-tales and legends of many countries. Each volume is illustrated, in four colours, by Joan Kiddell-Monroe.

Our country has an unrivalled treasury to draw on, so the reading in this book is very, very good. We begin with the heroic sagas, in the dawn of time when the people who lived in Ireland were gods and children of gods. "They were of radiant beauty and godlike bearing, and they loved above all things poetry, music and beauty of form in man and woman . . . These people were descended from the goddess Dana, and so were called the

De Danaans, or the People of Dana." But for all their radiance, sorrow is never far from them—that, perhaps, is the root-cause of their undying grandeur—"Three sorrows of storytelling fill me with pity." *The Quest of the Children of Tureen, The Children of Lir*, and, later, *The Fate of the Sons of Usnach*—generation after generation has responded to these tales. And when they have been re-told in a language of fitting quietness and dignity, the time of Cuchullin is vivid in our minds.

But it is when she comes to the boyhood of Finn that the re-teller of these tales rises to her best. Long before he is head of the Fianna this young man has proved he is no common youth. He has grown up "ranging the mountains and the bogs, with no companions but the polecat and the rabbits, the hare and the deer, so that he grew to love Nature and all the sounds and sights of the wild mountains and the bogs, the rivers and the woods, and that love remained with him all his life." Under the leadership of Finn the Fianna rose to the height of their glory. He was beloved by all. He was just and generous. He and his chieftains lived on the Hill of Allen, and were renowned throughout the land for valour and fair dealing.

We have been led through the times of Cuchullin and of Finn, and the last portion of this book is given to Tales for the Chimney Corner. Good though they are this is regretted by one reader. The folk-tales are not on a level with the sagas. Yet, how could they be? A daisy does not aspire to be a madonna lily . . . and to how many children daisies bring more joy than a lily ever can? These tales are particularly valuable because they are versions—retold now—but taken down from Irish-speaking storytellers towards the end of the last century.

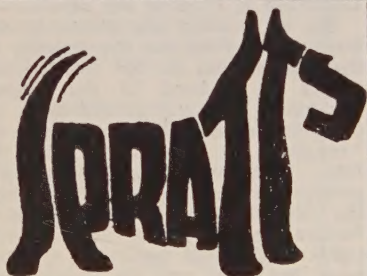
Have this book. Keep it in your home. Only foolish people ignore what enriches life.

Teresa Deevy.

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTES of the new contributors

Thomas Tully: Born Glasgow, 1933, of Irish descent. Has spent most of his youth in Ireland and returns whenever he can. Is a Civil Servant. Took up writing about a year ago.
Noel Keaveney: Born Cork, 1933, where his parents had come from Galway. This is his first appearance in print.

Brian O'Doherty: Born near Ballaghaderin, Co. Roscommon, 1928. Educated in University College, Dublin. Has published some art criticism in the 'Irish Monthly'. Has exhibited in the annual Dublin exhibitions and in London. Was included in the Bray Exhibition of Contemporary Irish Painting.



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